52e-1941

The Union
Cincinnati, Ohio

# Conference for Human Welfare!

# Poll Tax Fight!

JAN 30 1941

Nashville, Tenn. — Defying the corrupt machine politicians, led by the strawbosses of Ed Crump and "this is a white man's country" Governor Cooper, who yesterday killed a bill in the State Senate to abolish the poll tax, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare today speeded a state-wide campaign to bring majority rule to Tennessee.

A letter has been sent to Negro and white clergymen throughout the State, calling on them to preach on "the Poll Tax as a Moral Issue." This appeal is the opening gun in the campaign to organize a people's government to abolish the poll tax.

"Too long", declared Howard Lee conference secretary, "have we allowed the forces of evil which are personified in Boss Crump to crush the aspirations of the common people for their elementary democratic rights. Throughout the length and breadth of Tennessee we will organize to defeat at the polls every public official who votes not as the people wish but as Boss Crump dictates.

The Southern Conference for Human Welfare, which is also conducting a campaign against police brutality and the violation of civil liberties of Negroes and labor unions in Memphis is an organization of Southerners of all races, parties and creeds.

**REV. J. B. THOMPSON, NOTED TENNESSEE MINISTER, HAS ADDRESSED A POWERFUL LETTER OF PROTEST AGAINST EXISTING CORRUPT CONDITIONS, TO HIS FELLOW PASTORS.**

GENERAL
Tribune
Philadelphia, Pa.

# UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

JAN 2 3 1941

WASHINGTON RHODES

## DISFRANCHISEMENT OF MILLIONS IMPORTANT

THE National Republican Committee should sponsor a bill to prevent the disfranchisement of millions of voters in the South. Such a bill would be excellent political strategy and would gain for the party of Lincoln millions of voters. The voteless millions who are prevented from voting in violation of the Constitution would arise and anoint the heads of the sponsors of such a bill with millions of votes.

RHODES

**The bill could be called a "defense" measure. And those who opposed it should be called appeasers. The bill would be a "defense" measure because it would defend millions of citizens against discrimination while we fight the battles of free people all over the world. I call upon Emmett Scott and the high command of the Republican Party to present a bill to prevent the stealing of elections down in the black belt. And if the Republicans are afraid to do it, I am going to ask Senator Hill to get on the job. I want to get freedom for colored people in America at the same time we get it for the rest of the people in the world. I can not see why a bill of this kind would not receive the unanimous vote of Congress. Aren't we fighting for freedom for everybody everywhere in the world?**

Now I don't want somebody to tell me that we are so busy fighting for freedom all over the world that we do not have time to bother with the lack of freedom right here on our own doorstep. There are people like that. They are so busy fighting to get other people straight that they neglect to care for their own wives. We are so busy trying to straighten out Europe that we do not have time to clean out the rotten filth that infests our own country. Yes, I want Hitler licked. I want him crushed so badly that he will never be able to drop another bomb on a hospital or send another Jew to a concentration camp. And at the same time I want conditions so improved in my native land that a human being will never be burned at the stake or his right to vote taken away.

**The Republican masterminds are wondering what to do to get the colored vote back. I have all the answers. If the high command will do what I tell them to do there will not be one colored vote, other than those of jobholders, found in the Democratic column at the next election.**

The first step is to get a bill passed in Congress to end disfranchisement. I do not mean simply to present a bill as political pop. I mean get it passed and on the President's desk. Do not assume that it can not be done. It can be done. In fact, it must be done. It will require courage and hard work, but everything worthwhile requires the same thing. Aside from justice for colored Americans, such a law properly enforced would make America a truly democratic country where actual freedom prevailed.

News
Birmingham, Ala.

# First Lady Takes Up Sword On Poll Tax; Big Battle Brewing

FEB 9 1941

## Mrs. F. D. R. Says We Can't Deny The Vote And Still Be A Democracy

WASHINGTON—(AP)—Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt became the central figure last week in a developing controversy over the South's poll tax.

There were these significant developments:

1. Mrs. Roosevelt told a Richmond meeting last Saturday night that "we can not be a democracy and deny the vote to any individual." She addressed a Southern Electoral Reform League which had organized to consider means of abolishing the poll levy as a prerequisite to voting.

2. Three days later, a group interested in outlawing the levy by federal enactment gathered at the White House to talk it over with the first lady. Among others, the callers included Senator Pepper (D., Fla.) and Representative Geyer (D., Calif.).

FEB 9 1941

3. Pepper, staunch New Dealer and a White House favorite, disclosed he was having an anti-poll tax bill prepared and would introduce it soon. Representative Geyer made an unsuccessful fight against the tax last year and reintroduced his bill at the beginning of this session.

Pepper admits he will find but few supporters among Southern legislators. Many predict a filibuster in the Senate if and when the bill reaches that stage.

The White House callers guarded their comments on the conversation with Mrs. Roosevelt. But as word got around that the conference had been held, legislators began to attach new importance to the movement to outlaw the poll tax.

The levy as a prerequisite to voting is collected in eight Southern states — Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee and Texas.

Persons seeking to outlaw it argue thousands are denied the ballot because they are unable to pay the tax. The restricted franchise, they say, encourages corrupt political machines.

FEB 9 1941

On the other side, it is pointed out that its proceeds go to the operation of schools in most of the eight states. Defenders of the tax brand the bill to abolish it as an attempted invasion of states' rights.

Geyer's bill would prohibit the collection of a tax as a prerequisite for voting in presidential or congressional elections. Pepper said his would extend the prohibition to primaries. Both would subject any official collecting such a tax to fine or imprisonment.

Maury Maverick, fiery mayor of San Antonio, Tex., and former congressman, led a delegation to Washington last year to seek federal legislation eliminating the tax. Unable to get their bill introduced by a Southern member, they found a friend in Geyer. Until Pepper expressed his interest two months ago, the Californian had made almost a one-man fight.

A House judiciary subcommittee held a long hearing on the Geyer bill last Spring. When it ended, Chairman Walter (D., Pa.) declared the measure unconstitutional and shelved it. There it stayed, dying with the Seventy-Sixth Congress.

Time and again, Geyer appealed to the House for help. He tried to discharge the committee and force his bill to the floor. He even attempted to attach it in modified form to the selective service bill as an amendment.

Although he made no claim for White House support, Pepper predicted better treatment for the poll tax elimination bills this year. He resolved to get his measure referred to the judiciary committee, headed by Senator Van Nuys (D., Nev.). The privileges and elections committee, to which it might be referred, is headed by Senator Connally (D., Tex.).

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

# Howard Professor Lists 16 Devices To Keep Vote From Southern Negro

JAN 18 1941

Dr. Ralph Bunche, head of the political science department at Howard university, told a scholarly white group here last week that the severe policies of registration officials in the deep south is the main cause of the mass defranchisement of the southern Negro.

Speaking at a session entitled "The Negro in American Politics" before members of the American Political Science association at its thirty-sixth annual convention, Dr. Bunche outlined 16 devices currently employed by southern registration officials to prohibit or discourage Negroes from registering and voting.

JAN 18 1941

It was the first time in the history of the organization that a session had been devoted to a study of the political status of the Negro. Besides Dr. Bunche, another Negro, George Snowden, a graduate of Shaw university, presented a paper on "Recent Trends in the Political Behavior of Negroes in New York City."

"Perhaps the most striking feature of the southern political picture is the low voting ratio, due almost as much to the disfranchisement of large numbers of poor whites as to the political disqualification of the Negro," said Dr. Bunche.

"The franchise problems of black and white citizens in the South today are inter-related. Negro non-voting is more than a mere by-product of racial disunity. Non-voting of both black and white citizens is essentially a broad derivative of the political and economic structure of the South."

According to Dr Bunche, who has written several volumes based upon a study of the southern Negro, there is no uniformity of practice as between states as to devices employed in order to prohibit or discourage Negroes from registering and voting.

In some states registration is extremely difficult and quite out of the question as a result of the severe policies of registration officials and the hostility of the community.

Among the most important devices in current usage outlined by Dr. Bunche are the following.

1. Exclusion from the Democratic primary. This is in actuality a "white" rather than a "democratic" primary, for all whites, whether Democratic or Republican, are frequently admitted to it, while all Negroes are barred.

2. Requiring one or more white character witnesses. Often the Negro applicant must have these appear in person.

3. Strict enforcement of the literacy tests against Negro applicants: i.e., requiring "reasonable" interpretation of the Constitution, and always to the satisfaction of the officials.

4. Putting unreasonable questions to Negro applicants in constitutional understanding or interpretation tests.

5. Severe application of property qualifications and requiring only Negro applicants to show property tax receipts.

6. Basing rejection of Negro registrants on alleged minor mistakes in filling out registration blanks.

7. Evasion, by informing Negro applicants that registration cards have "run out," etc.

8. Requiring Negro applicants to suffer long waits before the officials attend them.

9. Requiring Negro applicants to fill out their own blanks though those of white applicants are filled out for them by officials.

10. Deliberate insults, humiliations or theats by officials and hangers-on.

11. Disregarding only Negro applications for conviction of misdemeanors.

12. Requiring enrollment in Democratic clubs, from which Negroes are barred, for primary voting, as in South Carolina.

13. Severe application of the cumulative poll tax to Negro though not to white voters.

14. Loss of jobs or threat of loss of jobs by those Negroes who get "uppity" and insist on their right to register.

15. Warning prospective Negro voters in small towns that they will be "marked men" in the white community.

16. Intimidation through physical violence.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Geyer To Force Out Anti-Poll Tax Measure

FEB 21 1941

WASHINGTON, D. C.— (ANP) —Under the parliamentary rules governing the house of representatives, unless some delay in the adjournment dates occur, Congressman Lee Geyer of California plans to petition the house that his bill, known as H. R. Bill 1024, the anti-poll tax measure, be brought out from committee, the same as the anti-lynch bill was done last year, for an open discussion and vote.

FEB 21 1941

The tentative date set for this is February 24 and if there is no hitch in the plans, there will be plenty of fireworks as the congressman is strongly counting on the methods of the NAACP to bring this much needed to the center of the floor for discussion.

The bill provides that "It is unlawful for any person, whether or not acting under the authority of the laws of the state or subdivision thereof, to require the payment of a poll tax prerequisite for voting or registering to vote at any election for a president or vice-president, or presidential elector or senator or member of the house of representatives of the United States."

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## DESTROYING DIXIE'S DICTATORSHIP

Since 1876 when the North tired of Reconstruction and turned the Negro over to the Southern oligarchy of planters, merchants and bankers, Dixie has been a dictatorship as rigid as any extant; but last week the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a decision that may spell its doom.

By a 4 to 3 vote, with Chief Justice Hughes not participating, the High Court held that Congress has the power to regulate primary elections for the nomination of candidates for Federal offices, and under this decision there is a possibility of also abolishing the poll tax.

When the North made its deal with the South in 1876, as an outcome of the Hayes-Tilden election controversy, and thereby washed its hands of the freedmen, the doom of the Southern Negro as a voter was sealed.

Negroes continued to be a factor in Congressional elections in isolated sections as late as 1900, but a combination of terror and biased legislation finally eliminated them from any influence in national elections as far as the South was concerned.

While the second section of the Fourteenth Amendment has long offered an opportunity to Congress to penalize States denying citizens the right to vote by cutting their Congressional apportionment, both Republican and Democratic Congresses have neglected or refused to so implement the Amendment.

Now, in ruling against five New Orleans election officials accused of ballot alterations and fraudulent vote counting, the U.S. Supreme Court holds that Congress has full power over the hitherto sacrosanct Southern Democratic primaries from which Negro citizens are habitually barred.

This decision threatens to completely overthrow the entire system of political dictatorship based on racial extraction and economic status with which the reactionary South has mocked democracy.

In handing down the majority decision, Justice Stone said:

> ". . . a primary election which involves a necessary step in the choice of candidates for election of representatives in Congress, and which in the circumstances of this case, controls that choice, is an election within the meaning of the Constitutional provision and is subject to Congressional regulation as in the manner of holding it. . . .
>
> "The primary in Louisiana is an integral part of the procedure for the popular choice of Congressman. The right of qualified voters to vote at the Congressional primary in Louisiana and to have their ballots counted is the right to participate in that choice."

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# CIO Petitions High Court On Poll Tax Illegality

### Southern Conference for Human Welfare Join in Fight on Tennessee Case; Lewis Aids Pirtle Plea; Cite Bases for Unconstitutionality

(Daily Worker Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 3.—The CIO and Southern Conference for Human Welfare today presented a joint petition to the United States Supreme Court declaring the poll tax in Tennessee illegal and unconstitutional and urging that a lower court ruling which upheld the tax be set aside.

Lee Pressman, General Counsel of the CIO, and Crampton Harris, of Birmingham, presented the petition on behalf of Henry Pirtle who has charged that the Tennessee poll tax is unconstitutional and refused to pay the tax.

John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare cooperated in preparing the Pirtle case for presentation to the Supreme Court.

LEE PRESSMAN

**BASED ON 3 POINTS**

The petition argued that the poll tax was illegal and unconstitutional on three main grounds:

1. "The right to vote for members of Congress is a right arising from and fundamentally based on Art. 1, Sec. 17 of the Constitution of the U. S.

2. "Rights and privileges arising out of the Constitution of the U. S. are not subject to state taxation in any form.

3. "The 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the U. S., in prohibiting any state from making or enforcing any law abridging the privileges and immunities of citizens of the U. S., renders invalid and unconstitutional the imposition by the state of Tennessee of a poll tax as a prerequisite to the right to vote for members of Congress."

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

## U. S. Into Primaries

The Democratic party in the South has lost its standing as a "private club" with the privilege of choosing who may vote in its primary election. The supreme court of the United States in ruling that the federal government has control over primaries as well as general elections has struck a blow at the system by which Negroes have been barred systematically from the polls below the Mason and Dixon line.

In the South, a victory in the Democratic primary is tantamount to election. When Negroes are prevented from participating in the primary, they are denied the right to make the all-important choice of candidates for public office. Voting in the general election is a mere formality.

For 20 years, the southern Democrats have barred Negroes from the primary on the basis of the supreme court decision in the Newberry case in which it was held that the states, not the federal government, had authority over primary elections.

Now comes last week's Louisiana case reversing that decision and saying that "where the state law has made the primary an integral part of the procedure of choice, or where in fact the primary effectively controls the choice, the right of the elector to have his ballot counted at the primary is likewise included in the right protected."

Under this interpretation of the old 1870 conspiracy statute (which was passed to protect the citizenship of the Negro), southern Negroes have a new weapon with which to fight for the primary vote.

Southern News
almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# *Stress Importance Of Fight Against Poll Tax*

WASSHINGTON.—"No single political issue outranks the poll tax in importance to achieving American democracy," says a statement given out this week by Labor's Non-Partisan League. The statement was made in connection with arguing before the United States Supreme Court of the case of Henry Pirtle. Pirtle's petition asked the Supreme Court to set aside a lower court ruling that upheld the poll tax in Tennessee.

**The United Mine Workers of America and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare are cooperating in the case. It was presented to the Supreme Court by Crampton Harris, of Birmingham, and Lee Pressman, general counsel of the Congress of Industrial Organizations.**

"The question is, of course of deep concern to the whole nation," the statement says "because these poll tax representatives act as charimen of many important committees and pass on legislation affecting the entire country. Many of these men would be retired from public life if the poll tax did not prevent thousands of their constitutents from casting ballots on election day."

The statement points out two issues of immense importance in the South in which John L. Lewis, the league's chairman, is actively engaged. One is elimination of the wage-differential between North and South, the other is elimination of the poll tax.

Southern News
almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

## IT'S THE LAW:

# *Is The Poll Tax Constitutional?*

IS THE poll tax constitutional?

Most people without thinking about it, assume that it is. The main reason they think so is that they have the impression that the poll tax has been in existence for a very long time. This is only partly true. The poll tax, as a revenue measure, is ancient. But, as a means of restricting the electorate to a minority of fairly well-to-do people, it is a comparatively new idea. In Alabama, the poll tax, as a voting requirement, is 40 years old. In the seven other poll tax states, all of which are in the South, it is about the same.

Time-worn tradition is not a safe guide to constitutionality in any case. Times change and interpretations of the Constitution change with them. It was a by-word of constitutional law for generations that Congress has no power to pass a law against child labor—that was a matter for the states alone. But, last Spring, the Supreme Court had a change of heart on that subject and federal child labor legislation is now constitutional. For years it was assumed that Southern state and local officials could systematically exclude Negroes from jury service without geting into trouble with the U. S. Constitution. Then the Supreme Court, in the Scottsboro case, changed that idea.

A FEW years ago the Supreme Court, in the Breedlove case, decided that the poll tax was constitutional. Now a new test case, the Pirtle case, is being brought before the Court by the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and the United Mine Workers. The brief in the Pirtle case was filed a few weeks ago and the Supreme Court is expected to decide the case when it reconvenes next Fall.

The Pirtle case raises constitutional questions entirely different from those on which the unfavorable decision was rendered in the Breedlove case.

In the Breedlove case, lawyers for the American Civil Liberties Union told the Supreme Court that the poll tax was unconstitutional because it was legislation which discriminated against poor people unable to pay it, because it set up a government by the upper-income fourth of the population instead of government by the people. This is sound common sense. But, as constitutional law, the Supreme Court could not see it at that time. The Supreme Court answered that the poll tax is not franchise-restricting legislation, it is revenue legislation and the denial of the right to vote to persons who have not paid it is merely a means of collection.

Now, watch closely and we will show you how the Pirtle case lawyers have turned the Breedlove defeat into an asset.

The Pirtle case raises only the question of poll taxes in the election of a member of Congress. How congressmen are elected is governed by Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution of the United States. This clause says merely that members of the House of Representatives shall be "choosen by the people" and that, in each state, the "qualifications" of voters shall be the same as those necessary to vote for a member of the state legislature.

This means that the right to vote in a Congressional election is GRANTED BY THE CONSTITUTION to a class of persons, namely, those persons who possess the qualifications necessary to vote for a member of the state legislature. Payment of the state poll tax is a requisite to vote in the state election. But is it a "qualification?" A qualification is a test of supposed fitness to vote, such as a literacy test. **But the Supreme Court has already held, in the Breedlove case, that the poll tax is not a regulation of the franchise but a revenue measure.**

It folllows that Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution confers on those persons able to pass the fitness tests set up by state law a RIGHT TO VOTE for members of Congress. That right, once conferred by the supreme law of the land, cannot be withdrawn, abridged or taxed by one of the 48 states.

The Supreme Court cannot avoid a favorable ruling in the Pirtle case, without departing from the logic of its previous decisions, **including the Breedlove case.**

IS THE poll tax constitutional in state elections? The answer is: Yes, as long as the Breedlove case stands. But the Breedlove decision is reactionary and unreasonable. It should be overruled and some day it will be, unless the poll tax is first abolished by other means.

In connection with the constitutionality of the poll tax in state elections it is well to remember the forgotten words of the U. S. Consitution: Amendment 14, Section 2. That clause says that **if any state restricts the franchise it shall have its representation in Congress proportionately reduced.** When your local poll tax statesman starts his Fourth of July oration about the sacredness of the Constitution, ask him what he thinks about enforcing Section 2 of the Fourteenth

52e-1941

Chattanooga, Tenn. Daily Times
January 21, 1941

## NEGRO VOTERS' LEAGUE TO MEET FRIDAY NIGHT

Members of the Colored Voters' league, Walter C. Robinson, president, who held a meeting in protest to certain activities of the league, will meet again Friday night at the Green Derby, 506 East Ninth street, it was announced yesterday by H. W. Newell, chairman.

All ward and precinct chairmen are invited to be present, he stated.

Meanwhile The Times received a communication signed by W. C. Hixson and J. W. Williams, stating that the report of the meeting last Friday night was misleading.

"The election of officers of the Voters' league was held Jan. 2, and Walter C. Robinson was elected to succeed himself. There was no one else offered. As to the report in the paper, it is true that members of the league were present at the Friday night meeting, but only two expressed dissatisfaction," the letter said.

afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

## Geyer to Force Out His Anti-Poll Tax Bill

FEB 22 1941

BY ANP.
WASHINGTON

Circulating of a petition to force his anti-poll tax bill out of the committee now holding it is being considered by Congressman Lee Geyer of California, he announced this week.

The measure would outlaw the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite for registering or voting for Federal candidates.. A similar petition was effective last year in forcing the antilynching bill onto the floor of the House for debate.

Nation
New York, N. Y.
Poll Tax Jury FEB 8 1941
FEB 8 1941

*Dear Sirs:* Jonathan Daniels's excellent column on the Odell Waller case in your issue of December 21 summarizes the issues accurately and fairly. However, I changed my opinion of the case's significance about a week after I discussed it briefly with him over long-distance telephone, and when I was better informed as to the circumstances. It is therefore no longer accurate to say that I regard it as "merely a murder, not involving injustice to the convicted Negro." I am not prepared to say definitely that injustice was done, but I confess that I am not sure either way.

We have published two editorials in the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* stating that the case seems to provide one more argument against the unjustifiable poll tax, since the grand jury which indicted Waller, and included two Negroes, was composed of persons "entitled to vote and to hold office under the constitution of this state," in accordance with Virginia law. Officials of Pittsylvania County, where the trial was held, deny that the poll tax entered in any way into the selection of the petit jury which gave Waller the electric chair. Governor Price has granted him a reprieve until March 14 to permit an appeal.

FEB 8 1941

Early handbills on the case were misleading and inflammatory, but later literature is much more nearly in conformity with the facts. However, there is nothing anywhere therein to inform the public that Waller shot Davis twice in the back, when Davis, according to uncontradicted witnesses, was unarmed.

VIRGINIUS DABNEY,
Editor, Richmond *Times-Dispatch*
Richmond, Va., January 30, 1941

GENERAL

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

## THE LODGE RESOLUTION

In pointing out the defects in the present electoral college system, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., of Massachusetts drew special attention to disfranchisement of the Negro. Unlike many of his colleagues in Congress who talk much and do nothing, Senator Lodge backed up his conviction a few weeks ago by introducing a joint resolution calling for a constitutional amendment to provide for a popular election of the President and Vice President of the United States.

Under a system in which no minority votes are counted, he said, there is scant incentive to bring out the Negro vote. On the other hand, a system that upholds the sanctity of the ballot of the minority would call forth a wider public participation in government, because, as Senator Lodge argued, even though a voter is in the minority in his own state, he may not be in a minority nationally.

FEB 22 1941

This, of course, is no new issue. It has been discussed many times. Senator Lodge's resolution, however, represents the first legislative attempt to remedy a very serious defect in our electoral system. Southern congressmen have always contrived to silence even mild mutterings about disfranchisement. The reason is obvious. If this matter ever reaches the stage of definitive enactment one of two things will happen: either southern representation in Congress will be reduced or the Negro vote which is now discounted in many sections in Dixie will become a determining factor. In the latter case it means that direct proportional representation—a basic feature of representative government—would bring to Congress men whose obligation to their black constituents would compel them to consider their interests before voting for any measure. It means also an end to scandalous social and economic injustices practiced today with impunity in the South. Moreover, it would revolutionize the whole concept of southern "democracy" to the point of making Dixie a virtual paradise for all who dwell therein.

FEB 22 1941

The Lodge resolution may die in the committee room. Its own obituary was written when it embodied the issue of disfranchisement in a constitutional amendment. It may die from lack of collective support by the very people whom it would benefit most, or it may die from a blow struck by organized opposition of the southern bloc in Congress. A law dealing merely with proportional representation will not be an effective remedy. What we should like to see pass is a measure so worded as to prevent the use of the vicious method through which Negroes in many sections of the South are disqualified from voting. Such a measure must have the whole-hearted support of the people—especially our people. Unfortunately our people seem to be asleep or dead. How they can be awakened or resurrected, is the great question now before our leaders.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

JAN 10 1941

### NEED BALLOT RESTRICTIONS

To The Commercial Appeal:

Nature has it so that nothing becomes fixed. It is in this course that social orders of all ranks and kinds are ever under challenge.

It is on this principle of challenge that social progress has been made and that some measure of democratic rule has been enjoyed in the world. And the nearest expression of this democratic way is in representative government by the ballot.

JAN 10 1941

The ballot is no guarantee of freedom. It is only a weapon of freedom that may be turned to the enemy. It is this threatened turn on democracy that thrust forward a problem fraught with danger.

Some of the things that portend to this turn are: the cry of emergencies, coddling the public with promises and free bounties, agitation of class prejudice, special grants of power that never expire and to keep up a state of commotion by spectacular moves and class war, etc. By such means and indulgence the way is paved for encroachments which lead on to a controlled ballot.

And now, as though to cure an ailing democracy, it is proposed that the volume of ailment be increased by removing all restrictions on the ballot. In no sense would an enlarged ballot contribute to a more independent ballot. With government on the expansion together with all manner of government aid and relief going out to millions of people it would only tend to entrenchment and to a trammeled ballot. Under a controlled ballot, as in dictator states, the larger the vote the more a dictator has to point to as vindication of his policies.

JAN 10 1941

The old absolutism of monarchs did not have the ballot to conceal their tyranny. In this day of education, the ballot is coming to be a weapon of despots. Mr. Hitler has reached the place that on March 29, 1936, out of a popular vote of 44,952,476, he got 98.5 per cent of the total.

And now, America says that Hitler is a dictator. But if a higher vote polled in a given population is proof that a country is the most democratic then Germany is more democratic than America has ever been. Hitler only has to point to his near total vote as popular approval of his leadership and policies and not a dictator.

The fight on democratic rule is nothing strange more than recognize it in a new guise. Just whether or not the American public will be soothed, coddled and hoodwinked by the false ropes of democracy is yet to be seen. The fight that is on is to see that democracy in our day and time is not eclipsed for a mess of porridge.

J. C. WHATLEY.
Morton, Miss.

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla.

## Rewarding The Negro Vote

With the inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt looming in the latter days of this month thoughtful Negroes over the nation should start thinking about types of progress to be made during the next forty-eight months. Unquestionably Negroes played their part in obliterating the third term boogy, and we are of the opinion that a complete check of the November vote will prove the black vote was a decisive factor in shattering tradition.

Since William H. Lewis was Assistant Attorney General under President Taft all Negroes close to cabinet officials have been "Special Assistants", "Advisors on Negro Affairs" or some other title setting them out as some sort of hyphenated employee of the government which does not in our judgement square with definitions of democracy.

JAN 1 1 1941

What we have said above does not indicate we feel our many "Special Advisors" have not been of value. We think in many instances they have preformed supurb tasks, but an honest-to-God recognition of the Negro vote, and black citizens in general, would suggest appointments resting more solidly and securely upon power and authority.

In this connection the Black Dispatch suggests that effort be made during the coming months to secure the appointment by the President of an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. Census figures compiled show that 36% of all the Negroes gainfully employed in the United States are engaged in agriculture. With the government attempting to decentralize the population at the present time no greater inspiration could be offered to Negroes than in the selection of a full-fledged Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. The full and almost complete time of such a person could be given to sympathetic and careful development of farm life in the rural sections beyond the Mason and Dixon Line.

Vice President-elect Henry A. Wallace, who has the president's ear, could well attest to the faithfulness of the Negro to the New Deal program. It is open knowledge to every one that the Negro vote in the south has during the past two years been depended upon to continue the cotton-control program of the New Deal. It shows that the Negro remaining on the farms down in Dixie has been awake to all of the benefits accrueing from the New Deal and has thrown his open support to it. Incidentally, it might be pointed out that the Cotton-control program gave the Negro farmer the only opportunity to vote he has had since President Hayes withdrew the federal troops from the south. When the Negro got a chance to vote he voted right just as he did in the reconstruction period, when he cast his ballot for the free public school system existing in the southland today.

We have fine material which President Roosevelt might requisition for the post of Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. We can think of at least six presidents of Land Grant Colleges who would admirably fit into such responsible position and we are also impressed with the fitness of such individuals as T. M. Campbell and Albon Holsey, both of Tuskegee.

JAN 1 1 1941

A Negro assistant in the Department of Agriculture could use his influence towards integrating Negro scientists into the various departments laid out in our nation's agricultural program, such as soil conservation, animal husbandry, agronomy and kindred subjects. No mere politician should be selected for such a post, but some black man fitted by years of training in the field of agriculture and related programs of rural life, should be named.

There is just one phase of such a move wholly political upon which we believe we should touch. The recent campaign ended with bitterness that never will be healed. As a matter of fact the revolution which took place in our political setup here in America has not, in the judgement of the Black Dispatch, been fully understood. Many voters who left the Republican party will never return to the fold and likewise many voters who left the Democratic party have kissed their former political affiliation good bye. This has created a political unbalance in parties. Capital and labor are definitely dividing and in the new alignment the Negro voter will occupy a more important place down in Dixie. We are almost sure the present political revolution will continue to a point where the "solid south" as we have known it will be a thing of the past.

If President Roosevelt and his advisors can visualize this picture; if the present administration would consolidate the gains already made among black voters, the method we have suggested here will be seen to have more worthwhile potentialities in it than any other political move.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# HOUSE TO RULE ON POLL TAX LAW

MAR 2 2 1941

WASHINGTON, Mar. 20—Representative Lee E. Geyer, Democrat, of California, offered in the House last Wednesday a resolution to make his anti-poll tax bill a special order of business.

By the terms of the resolution, upon the day following its adoption, the Speaker would recognize Mr. Geyer to call up for consideration his bill to amend the Hatch Act so as to forbid the requirement that poll taxes be paid as a prerequisite for voting at elections for the office of president, vice-president, presidential elector, senator and representative.

MAR 2 2 1941

General debate on the bill would be limited to four hours to be equally divided between the supporters and opponents of the measure. The special order would be a continuing order until the bill is finally disposed of.

The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Rules.

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

## Poll Tax Abolition Group to Meet

MAR 2 2 1941

Directors of the Southern Electoral Reform League, organized in February to work for abolition of the poll tax as a condition of suffrage, will meet at 1:30 p. m. today at the Women's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Avenue Northwest.

Presiding until election of officers will be David G. George of Beaver Dam, Va., one of the organizers of the league. After the election, the group will plan a membership campaign embracing the entire South. Tonight at 8 o'clock the league will sponsor a mass meeting in George Washington High School in Alexandria, Va.

MAR 2 2 1941

George said that most of those disfranchised by poll tax requirements are whites.

Constitution
Atlanta, Georgia

MAR 20 1941

**SOUTH AGAIN SUFFERS BY ONE-PARTY SYSTEM**

Editor Constitution: Your editorial in last Saturday morning's paper on Georgia not receiving her just proportionate share of the money being spent for our national defense is very amusing.

The editor of any southern newspaper should know all of the answers to the questions you asked. You remind me of an engineer who steps down from his engine and asks standersby and passengers why the train doesn't go places when he knows the brakes are on the wheels.

How could it be otherwise?

We southern people show very little political intelligence. Whether the perpetuation of the old Democratic party in the south is due to the Civil War hereditary thinking, regional prejudice or what not, it has the same fatal effect of not securing for us our just deserts and benefits in terms of our American political spoils system of government.

Inasmuch as we are cursed with the one-party system in the south there is no remedy for the situation as long as it exists except to send to congress more men of unusual mental ability and men who do not blindly follow the administration, so to speak.

MAR 20 1941

It is, indeed, a tragedy that we do not have a near equal division into two strong parties in the south. This division of our voters along political lines would give us cleaner politics, more benefits, and help to right the wrongs of administration, not only in our national government but in our local, state, municipal and county government.

MAR 20 1941

DR. JOHN A. HUNNICUTT.
Athens, Ga.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Gavagan Introduces Anti-Poll Tax Bill

JAN 24 1941

WASHINGTON —(ANP)— Besides the anti-lynch bill which he has introduced in the House of Representatives again this year, Representative Joseph A. Gavagan of New York comes to the aid of the anti-poll tax group with the introduction of one which would do away with the payment of poll taxes.

Known as H. R. 970, this bill is captioned, "a bill to amend an act to prevent pernicious political activities."

This amendment asks that the present act governing pernicious political practices state,

"It is declared unlawful for any persons, whether or not acting under the authority of the laws of a state or subdivision thereof, to require the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite for voting or registering to vote, at any election for a president, or vice president or presidential elector or senator or member of the house of representatives of the congress of the United States.

"The term election as used herein shall be construed to embrace any primary election where candidates are selected for president or vice president, presidential electors or senator or member of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States.

"Any violation of the above section shall be punishable by a fine of $1.000 for each violation thereof or for a term of imprisonment of one year and a day or by both such fine and imprisonment."

Christian Recorder
Philadelphia, Pa.

**POLL TAX DISFRANCHISES MILLIONS OF VOTERS**

JAN 9 1941

Election returns again reveal the way in which the poll tax sabotages democracy at the polls in the south. The percentage of voters voting in the old poll tax states ran from 12.4 in South Carolina to 32 in Tennessee. In Mississippi less than 20 per cent voted and the average in the eight poll tax states was less than one-fourth of all of voting age. In the four old southern states that have abolished the tax the average was twice as high. This leaves the apathy of a one-party region plus the general abstention of Negroes to account for the absence of the other half from the ballot box.

The Christian Century.

Charleston S. C. News & Courier
February 2, 1941

**The Revolution. II**

The forty-eight states of the republic and the District of Columbia have a population of 131,668,275. Without the District, the states have 131,006,184.

Of these states twenty-five have an aggregate population under 25,000,000.

Of the twenty-five, eleven have populations in excess of 1,000,000 and under 2,000,000, and fourteen have populations under 1,000,000. The combined population of New York and Pennsylvania, 23,379,322, is a little more than 1,000,000 short of the population of the twenty-five. Of these twenty-five, three are Southern.

The United States senate is composed of ninety-six members and the house of representatives of 435 members.

The twenty-five small states of approximately 25,000,000 inhabitants have eighty-four house members compared with 351 for the twenty-three states having a population of 106,000,000.

The twenty-five states have fifty senators, or a majority of four in that body.

In the Electoral College they have 134 votes.

With 19 per cent of the population they have 25 per cent of the voting strength in the Electoral College.

Thirty-three votes in the senate, when all senators are voting can prevent the confirmation of an appointment to a judgeship, minister to a foreign country or other office.

---

About thirty-five states are rural, without cities comparable with New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Boston, Buffalo, St. Louis, Pittsburgh. Of them are Georgia, Kentucky, Alabama, Texas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Virginia, Oklahoma. They have populations of more than 2,000,000 each but are not dominated by cities, they are not industrialized, in their social constitution they may be counted with the twenty-five. (Of the twenty-five with less than 2,000,000 inhabitants, Maryland, Delaware, Rhode Island, Connecticut are industrial rather than agricultural.) New Orleans (482,282) is the only Southern city having as many as 400,000 people.

Ten of the forty-eight states, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Wisconsin, have an aggregate population of 60,191,789, half the population of the whole country, and 17,896,457 of their people dwell in nine cities of more than 500,000 inhabitants. New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit have 14,318,450, which is more than seven times the whole population of South Carolina. The nine states have forty other cities ranging between 100,000 and 500,000 In them are hundreds of manufacturing towns as large as or larger than Anderson, Greenville or Spartanburg.

---

Accepting Samuel Lubbell's conclusion in his Saturday Evening Post article as true that the labor, the foreign element and the negro vote, in great Northern cities is now "class conscious", not party, it is clear that it cannot control the United States while the present constitution lasts. In at least thirty-five states, the labor vote does not dominate and as the states, not the people, elect presidents and congressmen, the labor in them, though it voted with the labor in the Northern cities, would not be ascendant in the republic. Nor would labor finally unite everywhere. If, for example, a labor government, were elected with the Northern negro vote an indispensable factor, demand that Southern cotton mills and their villages be opened to negroes would follow. Right there would be trouble. Separation of the races in industry underlay the establishment of the Southern cotton mills.

Equal representation of the states in the senate cannot be changed without unanimous consent of the states. At any time the senate can veto the policy of the executive however he have a popular "mandate." That has been demonstrated time and again.

The supreme court justices hold office for life--during good behavior. No mortal can predict the opinions of Justices Frankfurter, Douglas and the rest in 1951—as none in 1933 could predict the "point of view" of Justices Hughes and Roberts in 1941.

---

The New Deal contemplates popular government, One Big State, and that "socialized" for the "general welfare." It cannot be had without revolution, without tearing down and rebuilding the federal constitution.

The "right to revolution" cannot be argued—in Russia, Germany, Guatemala, the United States. In the United States it may be expedient and desirable—The News and Courier does not think so, but that is neither here nor there.

Revolution may be violent or peaceful. The federal constitution provides for peaceful revolution. The states can make a new constitution as they made the present one. The senatorial representation, the separation of the three branches (the checks and balances) make it practically impossible. The little states and the rural states will not surrender their power to the city and industrial states. The senate, the Electoral College, the courts, will retain the power to fling a monkey wrench into the New Deal. Under the present constitution impeachment of a president was once undertaken. Were passions sufficiently aroused it might be tried again, no matter who be the executive.

Or revolution may be violent and bloody. Rhode Island, Delaware and South Carolina might be suppressed with machine guns. Once South Carolina was suppressed as a free state by the bayonets of the executive and the congress.

---

For a time the objectives of the New Deal's revolution may be gained by purchase —of the poor and small states. That is factual now. Some of these states have been in coma the last eight years. Our own state, in which a fraction more than 5 per cent of the people vote, is the living illustration (to indulge in a bull) of a dead democracy.

---

Government by purchase cannot be permanent. If we are to have the Socialized State, as implied in the New Deal philosophy, we have got, soon or late, to come to the methods of Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler, however in softened and greatly modified form. We have got to throw off pretense and hypocrisy, cease the effort to abolish the constitution by indirection, subterfuge, word-juggling. The News and Courier is not denouncing revolution. It denounces the underhanded revolution now attempted that is undermining the character of Americans, converting them into a nation of Uriah Heeps.

Without the "reconstruction" of the federal constitution, the New Deal is a Doomed Deal and has been from its birth in the minds of politicians and mind-masked brains trusters.

Southern News
almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# Poll Tax—"Bottle Neck" Of Democracy

By SAM HALUAN JAN 16 1941

The News Almanac is a year old this week. And a first birthday is a good time to look back over the road that has been traveled. Such a look reveals one issue that has stood out in our year's battles. The fight against the poll-tax has been featured above all else in our columns.

There's good reason why this is so. I might explain by using a term the industrialists have advertised so well lately.

The poll tax is the "bottle neck" of democracy.

There is the place where all our democratic longings and our fight to solve the problems that so sorely beset us are blocked.

Three out of four adults in the poll tax states are robbed of the right to take part in the government over them. And what is the result? JAN 16 1941

Men are elected to office who care nothing for the needs and desires of the overwhelming majority of the people. The little bunch that feeds from the trough of special privilege twine their fat hands into the strings of government and the people suffer. Things are decided in smoked-filled back rooms that should be decided out in the open by all the people whose life and happiness are at stake. And the South remains the nation's economic problem number one. JAN 16 1941

All eight of the poll tax states are here in our South. We are the ones who suffer from it. We must lead the fight to blast the poll tax out of existence.

Too long we have put up with a condition that would have brought the blood boiling to the strong faces of the liberty-loving men and women who founded this nation. It's time we found a renewal of their fighting spirit.

We must smash this bottle neck of democracy. Then the strong, honest will of the people will pour forth in torrents to overwhelm the problems we must solve in our pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

Globe and
Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

## Congressman Geyer To Force Poll Tax Repeal To Vote

FEB 28 1941

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20 (ANP)—Under the parliamentary rules governing the house of representatives, unless some delay in the adjournment dates occur, Congressman Lee Geyer of California, plans to petition the house that his bill, known as H. R. Bill 1024, the anti-poll tax measure, be brought out from committee, the same as the anti-lynch bill was done last year, for an open discussion and vote. The tentative date set for this is Feb. 24 and if there is no hitch in the plans, there will be plenty of fireworks as the congressman is strongly counting on the methods of the N. A. A. C. P. to bring this much needed bill to the center of the floor for discussion. FEB 28 1941

The bill provides that "it shall be unlawful for any person, whether or not acting under the authority of the laws of a state or subdivision thereof, to require the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite for voting or registering to vote, at any resident, or presidential elector or senator election for a president or vice president or member of the house of representatives of the United States."

afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

## GOP to Swell Recognition of Colored Voters

### National Committee Approves Group to Study Plan

MAR 29 1941

WASHINGTON

Appointment of a committee to study the question of larger recognition of colored voters and larger consideration in the set-up of the party's headquarters machinery was authorized by the Republican National Committee, in session here Monday.

The plan was embodied in a resolution introduced by Perry W. Howard, National Committeeman for Mississippi. In keeping with the authorization thus given him, Chairman Joseph W. Martin, Jr., said he would name such a committee in the near future.

Other committees similarly authorized will study problems as the large city vote, rural vote and women's activities.

**Work Opportunities Urged**

Chairman Martin, in his remarks to the committee, called upon Republicans in industry and in politics "to widen opportunities for the employment of colored Americans, without discrimination," and "to provide greater opportunities for them in public service." MAR 29 1941

The session, held in the Willard Hotel, was attended by 80 of the 106 members of the committee, including Mr. Howard, Dr. S. D. Redmond as proxy for Mrs. Mary C. Booze, of Mississippi, and Robert R. Church, as proxy for Mrs. Ruby McLane of Tennessee.

Amsterdam News
New York, N. Y.

## POLL TAX BILL IS DISCUSSED

MAR 22 1941

### Lynching, Housing and Defense Program Are On Schedule

Lively discussion of the evils of the poll tax and methods of eliminating it provided the feature of the last meeting Monday of the Bronx Chapter of the Toussaint L'Overture Society of Hunter College. Jean Rogovin, explaining the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax bill, was the featured speaker, first white guest speaker in the history of the club. MAR 22 1941

The meeting was first of a series in conformity with the new program of the club which plans future discussions of lynching, housing and other current issues affecting the Negro, a college Negro History Week, a Freshman Indication party, inter-collegiate panel discussions on the Negro in National Defense and a formal prom in June.

The Negro History Week is set to begin March 31, according to announcement. MAR 22 1941

Adoption of a constitution and election of officers occupied the first meetings of the current term. The club's administrative staff includes Joyce Phillips, president; Elaine Bailey, vice-president; Phoebe LeSeane, secretary; Marie Jordan, treasurer. Committee chairmen include Frances Benson, and Gloria Gordon, social; Milroy Ingram, and Marjorie Mullett, program; Denise Detilleux, publicity. Miss Detilleux and Evelyn Spenser are representatives of the club to the National Federation of Student Organizations.

Chester, S. C., Reporter
June 23, 1941

The Democratic primary in the Southern States is no longer to be an exclusively white affair, participated in by whites only, who then translate their will into action at a general election, in which only a handful vote. Under the fiat of the U. S. Supreme Court white Democrats can no longer herd to themselves in this fashion. They must admit the negro to free and full participation to the extent he is qualified. In other words the right the veterans of Lee and Jackson, reinforced by men who had reached maturity since the close of the War Between the States, to have a white man's government has been wiped out by the uplifters at Washington. What course to pursue will have to be decided by our leaders, also the problem that has been tossed into their laps by the Supreme Court decision requiring like salaries for teachers of both races. Much depends on whether these problems can be worked out amicably. They can be, if interventionists will remain aloof. The Anderson Independent discusses the latter problem as follows: "Governor Maybank has a pesky problem on his hands in deciding what he is to do with the bill, passed by the Legislature in its final hours, which provides for increasing the salary of teachers $10 per month, but which fails to provide the necessary $1,000,000 revenue for that purpose. An equally serious problem, also left by the Legislature, is the matter of pay for Negro teachers in the state. A recent United States Supreme Court decision held there can be no differential between races in the matter of state-paid teacher salaries. A group of South Carolina Negro leaders have been quick to seize the opportunity afforded by this ruling, and already they have served notice upon the State Board of Education that they expect some action in line with the federal ruling. Many state leaders think they see a way of getting around the situation by adopting a teacher certification plan whereby pay would be based on grade. Under this arrangement most white teachers (but not all) would rank higher than most Negro teachers. Such a bill was before the Legislature at its past session, but the Assembly apparently dodged the entire question by the simple expedient of sidestepping this bill. From a financial standpoint the Negro pay question is more momentous than the salary increase for white teachers. Negro leaders are prepared to insist upon better treatment for their teachers, and under the federal ruling they are probably in position to force concessions. Other states, however, have faced and met similar problems to the satisfaction of all concerned by working out a formula that is mutually agreeable to all concerned. The problem is a serious one, and it could lead to disagreeable consequences unless educational leaders, acting in the light of the Supreme Court decision, use tact and sound judgment in attacking it."

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# Renew Fight On Poll Tax Law In South

## Florida Senator Would Outlaw Tax In Eight States

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Urging that the poll tax law now used in eight southern states be declared unlawful in federal elections, Senator Claude Pepper, Democrat, Florida, appeared last Saturday as a witness at a hearing on his Anti-Poll Tax Bill before a Senate judiciary subcommittee.

**QUESTION CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT**

Senator Pepper declared that the poll tax had been used in the southern states to "pollute, contaminate and prostitute" election of federal officials.

The question of the constitutional right of Congress to fix qualifications of voters within the several states was raised by Senator Norris, Independent, Nebraska, and O'Mahoney, Democrat, Wyoming.

**To this the senator replied that the Senate committee and congress should approve the bill, even if doubtful of its constitutionality. Mr. Pepper recalled that seven new justices had been named to the Supreme Court and predicted that the present highest court would uphold the bill.**

Chairman O'Mahoney then asked if the Florida senator was suggesting that a change in the court personnel might change its decision. To this Senator Pepper replied:

"I'm suggesting that just as the court takes judicial notice of changes in the legislature that Congress take notice of changes in the court."

**WOULD OUTLAW POLL TAX**

The Pepper Bill would outlaw the poll tax in primary and general elections for national offices. States now requiring the tax are: Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Texas, Arkansas, South Carolina and Mississippi.

A more recent decision of the Supreme Court, Senator Pepper testified, upheld congressional authority over primary elections. This, he added, indicated Congress could now outlaw poll taxes for national elections.

**The senator said it was a "monstrous suggestion" that a state had the power to confer upon citizens the right to vote for federal officials.**

The poll tax deprives 10,000,000 of the right to vote, Representative Geyer, Democrat, California, told the Senate group. He, himself, has introduced similar legislation in the House.

**Geyer said further that some southern congressional districts where the poll tax exists, as few as 5,000 votes were cast in electing a House member as compared with 100,000 votes in districts of other states.**

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# The Big Push Ahead In 1942

NEVER BEFORE in this generation has the challenge of political destiny been thrown in such emphatic terms. The lines have been clearly drawn and plainer than we have been able to perceive it is written in the skies that he who does not vote might not eat.

In the early days of Negro freedom, the older group met that challenge. The stories of their trials woud run into volumes. This generation has seen from time to time the failure of their government. Those who sought the suffrage of the people considered in their dispensations that a voteless group was not entitled to anything. It has been left for such a group to feed on the crumbs that fell from the table. In spite of political slavery and economic starvation and all our schools and colleges, we have among us those who insist that they can exist indefinitely without a ballot to fight off the perils designed in the normal sequence of things.

We are this day met with a grave situation. We have been able to recruit from the liberal thinking whites, many friends and advisers. These have come out in the open for justice and fair play for our group. They have been instrumental in the getting of many considerations that otherwise would not have been realized.

There stands a danger of a disintegration of these friends we fear if those being sponsored do not come around and qualify to enlist in the battle that threatens our very citizenship.

It is being freely discussed all over Georgia that this state can return to sanity and good government through the election of the proper men to office, many of our strong dailies and weekly newspapers all over the state are now urging an overhauling of our political structure.

The fight is between the machine polticians, who have been able to build up needless bureaus at the expense of the taxpayers for perpetuation in office and the free independent voters who believe in government for and by the people.

The only way to dethrone these machines is to out vote them. Machine government is definitely in the saddle in Georgia.

We must prepare now for the election next year! The Atlanta Civic and Political League is mapping a program for statewide registration. Get into the spirit and go now to the Courthouse and get registered or find out when you can.

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
September 3, 1941

## Both Parties Against Us

The Southern states have been "solidly Democratic", for the most part, since 1876 because the Republican party was the party of "Reconstruction", the national negro party, and for no other reason.

Curiously the name "Republican" holds the South in slavery. The facts weigh nothing against the memory of a name.

Those facts are that the Democrats in the last six or seven years have become the national negro party.

In the great cities of the North, some millions of negroes vote and four in five of them vote the Democratic ticket.

In Chicago the Democrats send a negro to congress; in New York are negro judges or magistrates and numerous other officeholders; in Philadelphia, Detroit, Pittsburgh, all the great cities, the negroes are an important part in Democratic machines.

These are the facts. No one disputes them. A senator from South Carolina, Mr. Byrnes, on the floor of the senate, speaking against an anti-Southern bill, supported by the president's wife and silently acquiesced in by the president himself, declared that "Negroes are now in control of the Democratic party".

The facts receive no attention from the South Carolina "leaders". The name "Republican" holds the South Carolinians in mental servitude. They, with the exception of a few men like former Chief Justice Eugene S. Blease, remain in complete ignorance of them.

The Republican party has not ceased to be a national negro party. It has not changed its bent of opposition to Southern opinion—however, in practice, the South was relieved of annoyance when Taft, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover were Republican presidents.

The staring fact is that both parties are national negro parties and that the Democratic party, is for the present, the agency through which the Northern negroes and their allies move against the white South.

The negroes will return to the Republican party if it shall appear to the interest of Walter White and other Northern negro leaders.

The alternatives before the white people of the South are:

To abandon their old position in respect of government, to accept the negroes on equal terms, to admit them into their primaries, finally to admit them into their colleges and then into their schools.

The second is for the Southerners to act and vote independently in national politics, to elect their state and county officers in exclusive white primaries, and vote for president and vice president with the party from which they can secure protection.

In short, they can choose presidential electors pledged to neither party in the Electoral College. This would be for the South to remain "solid" in respect to the only question that made it solid, for the Southerners to be their own national party.

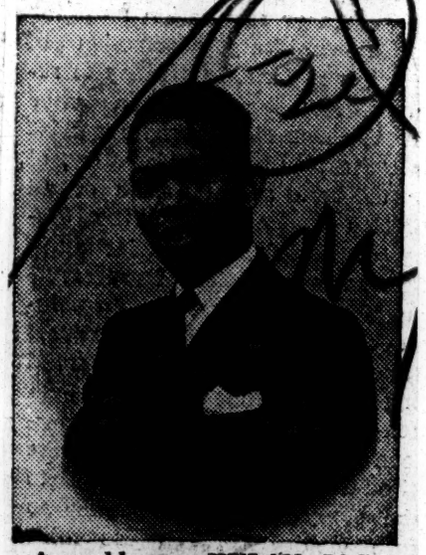
As long as presidents shall be chosen by the Electoral College the political problem of the South will be of easy solution. It can bring any national party to its knees.

A step in the direction of the independence of South Carolinians was taken in 1938 when participants in the state primaries were relieved of the pledge to support national Democratic candidates in the general election.

In South Carolina will be no going back to the days before 1938 when Democrats were bound and gagged in national elections. The politicians who tried last year to read the Jeffersonian Democrats out of the state party will not try it again.

New York ~~Age~~
New York, N. Y.
SEP 20 1941

## New Democratic Leader



Assemblyman HULAN JACK

## Assemblyman H. Jack Elected Democratic Leader of 17th A.D.

The third Negro member on the Tammany Hall executive board was elected Thursday night when Assemblyman Hulan E. Jackson was elected Democratic leader of the 17th Assembly District West at a meeting of one hundred county committeemen and captains at the Owasco Club, 115 West 116th street.

Assemblyman Jack succeeds William Solomon, former leader of the district, who was convicted recently on State printing bribery charges. Solomon voluntarily stepped down from the leadership "in the interests of party harmony," it was announced.

Elected co-leader of the district at the same time was Mrs. Rosa H. Dennistown, also Negro.

The other Negro members of Tammany Hall executive committee are Assemblyman Daniel L. Burrows of the 19th A.D., and Herbert L. Bruce of the 21st A.D.

SEP 20 1941

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
September 11, 1941

## Centralization and the Negroes

Centralization of power in Washington, with breaking down of the power of the states, would probably not, in the long run, serve best the program and ambitions of the American negroes. They have made political gains in recent years because the votes of those in the great American cities have had an abnormal strategic value. They sometimes have the balance of power in those cities, and the "machines," of both parties, trade with them. In the late years the trading, in New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Philadelphia and other cities has been with the Democratic bosses.

If it come to pass that the federal government shall be so strong that it can control without cultivating segregated groups of voters, the negroes will be the first to be ignored. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats, with the exception of a few who call themselves "intellectuals," are concerned for the negroes when no political campaign is in progress.

It is well within the possibilities that votes will in decade become of secondary importance in the United States, as they are in totalitarian countries.

Gadsden, Ala., Times
October 24, 1941

## Shift In Negro Population

The Negro population in the South has declined from approximately 36 per cent in 1880 to around 24 per cent in 1940, according to the Commission in Interracial Relations, in a statement made public at Atlanta.

In making the announcement, the Commission on Interracial Relations goes out of its way to take a dirty dig at at those Southerners who still believe in white supremacy by saying "Politicians who capitalize fear of Negro domination will get no support out of the figures," but that isn't important.

Interesting, though, is the fact that the "dig" is predicated upon the fact that Negroes no longer are in the majority in any Southern State, though they once outnumbered the whites in South Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana. The fact that they still outnumber the whites in many counties and that in these counties the colored voters would be in the majority were the poll tax and other restrictions removed, is blandly ignored.

However, the question of prime interest is what has become of these Negroes who have left the South and what influence has their migration had upon the social and economic and political order.

Most of these departing Negroes have gone to New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio where they have become powerful in a political sense, this situation resulting from a shrewd awakening to the fact that it was more profitable for them to dominate the Democratic party than to serve as a tail to the kite of the Republican party.

Having reached this conclusion they flocked over to the Democrats almost solidly and soon began to dictate national policies. Democratic support of vicious anti-lynch legislation being an example of the sort of stuff they were able to pull. But obtaining Democratic approval of legislation aimed at the humiliation of the South was only one phase of the subject. The political pap they were enabled to obtain as they threw scare after scare into the hearts of Northern Democratic leaders was something to write home about. Holding the balance of power in their states, all they had to do was to line up solidly behind some job-seeker and the job-seeker landed.

They brought about the appointment of the first Negro judge of a United States Court while filling numerous departments in Washington with Negro appointees. Today one stumbles over them at every turn in passing through public offices in Washington, it being no uncommon thing to observe a Negro office chief dictating to a white girl.

Thus it may be said that they have done right well by themselves since migrating to the North, virtually taking over the Democratic party in the doubtful states and exercising a tremendous influence in Washington itself. They even helped to bring about the abrogation of the two-thirds rule under which the South once was a power in the Democratic party. The abrogation of this rule put the big political machines of the North virtually in control of the party and since these machines are "skeered to death" of the Negro voters of New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago and so forth, they are sitting pretty.

Meanwhile racial relations are working around to the point where social barriers are being swiftly eliminated as such things happen as the first lady of the land accepting a "colored brother" as an escort to the platform in a public meeting.

Then, not to be overlooked, is the action of a revamped Supreme Court telling the South it must provide the same kind of schools and the same kind of teachers for colored as for white children, and informing Southerners as a whole that Jim Crow laws are dead cocks in the pit.

Yes, sir, Sambo have done right well by hese'f.

52e-1941
Globe and
Independent
Nashville. Tenn.



# Poll-Tax Senators Are "Unanimous" In Support of Measure

MAR 14 1941

## Vote Of 60 To 31 For Passage Signifies Lack Of National Unity For Bill G. O. P. Majority Against It.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Despite a propaganda offensive more costly, more intensive, and more intolerant of the views of sound-thinking Americans than that of 1917, the lend lease bill passed the senate on Saturday of last week without winning to its support a majority of the ablest members of that body.

MAR 14 1941

The final vote showed a majority of the Republicans in opposition to the measure and putting themselves on record for all time as believing the bill violates the campaign pledges of both the Republican and Democratic parties, that it is a War Bill instead of a Defense Bill and that the measure clothes President Roosevelt with the power of a dictator and forebodes America's entrance into Europe's war with an expeditionary force as was the case in 1917.

MAR 14 1941

The final vote was 60 for the bill to 31 against it. The sixty affirmative votes included 19 Democrats of whom 26 were Southern Democrats, who, it is conceded, would have voted just as enthusiastically against the bill had it been a Republican proposal. Party loyalty, more than anything else controlled the way Southern Senators voted on this measure, notwithstanding the fact that the continuance of war in Europe is playing havoc with the South's chief exports which are its cotton and tobacco. Of the 26 Southern Senators who were for the bill, a majority come from states that disfranchise a majority of their citizens by the poll tax law, and therefore they represent merely a minority of their people.

Poll-tax senators for the war bill include such notables as "Cotton Ed" Smith of South Carolina; Carter Glass, the "daddy of the poll tax" of Virginia and bitter foe of benefits for ex-service men; "Jim" Byrnes of South Carolina, said to be the next man Mr. Roosevelt will appoint to membership on the Supreme Court bench; Theodore Billbo of Mississippi and Pat Harrison of the same state; Senators George and Russell of Georgia; Hill and Bankhead of Alabama; Connally and Sheppard of Texas; McKellar and Stewart of Tennessee.

The solitary vote against the bill from the South was cast by Senator Reynolds of North Carolina, a state that has repealed disfranchisement by poll tax.

MAR 14 1941

Twelve stalwart Democrats from Northern and western states voted with Reynolds of North Carolina to compose a bloc that wiped out the votes of the ten Republicans who voted against the bill in violation to their party's 1940 platform. That platform was a covenant with the people to spend the taxpayers' money in preparation for National Defense. The bill as passed is generally understood to be a War Bill. It will allow the war equipment and food paid for out of the hard-earned money of Americans to be given away to a foreign nation under the specious plea that helping foreign nations to carry on a foreign war is defense of the United States.

The twelve Democratic stalwarts include Senator Burton K. Wheeler, of Montana, spearhead of the opposition to the bill and the most faithful defender of the working classes of America in the United States Senate; Senator Bennett Champ Clark who was one of the founders of the American Legion and an overseas veteran of the World War; Senator Gillette of Iowa, World War veteran, who says he took a vow on his knees in the mud of a battle field in France, the day the armistice was signed, to oppose ever again sending American soldiers to fight in the wars of foreigners; the twelve included Johnson and Adams of Colorado; Clark of Idaho; Walsh of Massachusetts; Patrick McCarren, the fighting Irishman of Nevada; Homer T. Bone of Washington; W. J. Bulow of South Dakota; Dennis Chavez of New Mexico; Peter G. Gerry of Rhode Island.

MAR 14 1941

The ten Republicans who it is believed will live to regret having supported the bill, if it puts America in war, included Senator Charles McNary, hitherto reputed to be one of the shrewdest politicians in congress; Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, who opposed the bill and then fell in line on roll call; Senator Austin of Vermont, who has been royally entertained by the British embassy; Senator Ball of Minnesota, who holds office by appointment of Gov. Stassen; White and Brewster of the Eastern seaboard state of Maine; Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, Harold Burton of Ohio and Chandler Gurney of South Dakota.

The roll call which registered the Republican Party as opposed to the bill contains the names of the "Who's Who" in the Grand Old Party. They are names to conjure with in any roll call of courageous Americans.

MAR 14 1941

There were 18 Republicans opposed to the passage of the bill. The list includes Arthur H. Vandenberg, concededly the ables orator of the Senate, whose speech in opposition to the bill's passage is said to take rank among the greatest orations ever delivered in the senate; Hiram Johnson of California, a veteran opponent of American involvement in foreign wars; Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, brilliant scholar and a leading presidential possibility; Senator Gerald P. Nye, of North Dakota, whose work in exposing munitions makers and war-profiteers and the part they played in getting America into the other World War was an outstanding achievement in the investigation of crooked business tycoons; C. Wayland Brooks, superb orator and a wounded veteran of the World War; Senator Arthur Capper, faithful friend of the farmer and of America's oppressed minorities Senator James Davis of Pennsylvania, The laboring man's friend; Danaher of Connecticut, who taught Miss Dorothy Thompson that debating with a United States Senator is reckless business.

Others of the famed 18 were Holman of Oregon, Langer of North Dakota, Shipstead of Minnesota, Thomas of Idaho, Fobey of New Hampshire, Wiley of Wisconsin, Willis of Indiana and Reed of Kansas.

Confident of the rectitude of their conduct, both Republican and Democratic opponents of the lend-lease bill have expressed their intention to continue their battle to keep American men and ships from being sent to engage in Europe's war. Many of the Senators will go on speaking trips to many parts of the country and endeavor to combat the propaganda for "national unity" that will aim to make the American people suppress their desires for peace and their desire to keep out of war, and become reconciled to giving the lives of the nation's young men to the cause of preserving democracy for Imperialist Britain, Communistic China and Fascist Greece.

MAR 14 1941

It is believed that the sentiment of the American people is so wholly opposed to involvement in war, that it needs only to be kept aroused by a patriotic leadership such as can be supplied by the anti-war members of congress.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Senate To Hold Poll Tax Hearings

MAY 11 1941

WASHINGTON (A N P)—The senate judiciary committee through its chairman has named a subcommittee to hold hearings on the Pepper Anti-Poll tax bill. Members named to the sub-committee are Sens. Joseph C. O'Mahoney of Wyoming; Tom Connally of Texas; Murdock of Utah; George W. Norris of Nebraska and Warren Asutin of Vermont.

MAY 11 1941

Rep. Geyer of California, long a foe of the poll-tax bill made the announcement from his office and further states that the day and date of the hearing will be announced as soon as it can be set.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

# CONG. L. GEYER ASKS ACTION IN POLL TAX BILL

MAR 22 1941

**Petitions House To Bring Out H.R. 1024 Aimed Against Measure**

WASHINGTON—(ANP)—Congressman Lee E. Geyer of California petitioned the House of Representatives Monday to bring out of committee the anti-poll tax bill, H.R. 1024.

The bill which would prohibit the collection of poll taxes as a requirement for voting in federal elections, was first introduced in Congress in August, 1939. Hearings were held by the sub-committee of the House judiciary committee last March, April and May, but no action has since been taken by the committee.

MAR 22 1941

The action by Representative Geyer follows a decision of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati Saturday, upholding the constitutionality of the poll tax as a prerequisite to voting.

The decision of the court, Representative Geyer said, makes even more necessary action by Congress to outlaw the poll tax. Congress has the power granted to it under the Constitution, and it has the duty especially in these times, to establish a 100 per cent democracy in the United States, he said.

Figures released by Representative Geyer show that voting is less in the eight states which require the payment of a poll tax than it is in the 40 states which have no such requirement for voting.

Geyer declared that the figures for the 1940 congressional elections showed that an average of little more than 22,000 votes were cast in 78 poll tax congressional districts, while in the non-poll tax states, almost 129,000 votes were cast.

MAR 22 1941

"These statistics," Representative Geyer said, "show that there is at best a fractional democracy for almost 25 million Americans. If Congress is to spend billions of dollars to defend democracy it should establish democracy for all of our citizens."

Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

# Congressman Geyer Urges Early Action On Federal Measure

**Says Passage Necessary Since Courts Have Upheld Oppressive Law Of Tennessee**

MAR 21 1941

WASHINGTON, March 20 (ANP) —Congressman Lee E. Geyer of California petitioned the house of representatives Monday to bring out of committee the anti-poll tax bill, H. R. 1024. The bill which would prohibit the collection of poll taxes as a requirement for voting in federal elections, was first introduced in congress in August, 1939. Hearings were held by the sub-committee of the house judiciary committee last March, April and May, but no action has since been taken by the committee.

The action by Rep. Geyer follows a decision of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati Saturday, upholding the constitutionality of the poll tax as a prerequisite to voting.

The decision of the court, Rep. Geyer said, makes even more necessary action by congress to outlaw the poll tax. Congress has the power granted to it under the constitution, and it has the duty especially in these times, to establish a 100 per cent Democracy in the United States.

MAR 21 1941

Figures released by Rep. Geyer show that voting is less in the eight states which require the payment of a poll tax than it is in the 40 states which have no such requirement for voting. Geyer declared that the figures for the 1940 congressional elections showed that an average of little more than 22,000 votes were cast in 78 poll tax congressional districts, while in the non-poll tax states, almost 129,000 votes were cast.

MAR 21 1941

"These statistics," Rep. Geyer said, "show that there is at best a fractional democracy for almost 25 million Americans. If congress is to spend billions of dollars to defend democracy it should establish democracy for all of our citizens."

Telegraph
Macon, Georgia

## Harping on Poll Tax

APR 4 1941

It might be worth while to look up the political pedigree of every one of these agitators who keep harping on repeal of the poll tax as a condition of voting in elections.

At the very least we find that it is a "reform" which other sections of the country seek to impose on the eight Southern states where the payment of poll tax is required.

APR 4 1941

The Institute of Public Opinion has just taken a survey which shows that throughout the nation as a whole 63 per cent of the straw voters think the poll tax should be abolished, but in the eight Southern states where payment is still required the voters are strongly in favor of retaining this requirement.

The institute found that among those in the eight Southern states who have already paid their poll tax for this year 59 per cent are in favor of retaining the system. Those who have not paid the tax but must do so before they can vote are then combined with those who have paid and the result still shows 53 per cent in the eight Southern states in favor of the tax.

The Institute of Public Opinion gives as its excuse for making the survey the pending bill in congress which would compel the eight Southern states to wipe out the poll tax.

APR 4 1941

How much oftener must it be repeated that the Supreme Court of the United States, in a case arising right here in Georgia has clearly and explicitly declared that the terms and condition under which the right of franchise may be exercised are exclusively in the jurisdiction of the states and that congress has no authority to abolish the poll tax?

Why keep on tilting at a windmill?

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

## Biggest Scamps

APR 12 1941

The biggest scamps in Dixie are the make-believe boys who pose as your friends.

There is, for example, the Danville, Va., Register, which in its April 2 issue said this editorially:

"So long as their aspirations and objectives are sound, colored citizens will find white people willing to encourage their progress."

APR 12 1941

But the white people of Danville have the best schools and the best jobs. Teachers' salaries are unequal. Colored people are disfranchised by the poll tax and everywhere there are jim-crow cars and busses.

Equality of citizenship is an unsound objective in the eves of the Danville Register.

Tribune
Philadelphia, Pa.

# Lily-White Dixie Primary Dealt Blow By High Court

By E. WASHINGTON RHODES

The Supreme Court decision on Monday which states that the Federal Government has the power to regulate primary elections in which nominees are selected for Federal officers is far-reaching in effect.

It apparently upsets the former opinions which held that political parties were like private clubs and therefore could restrict their membership to any class they please.

**Stone Delivers Decision**

Justice Stone who delivered the majority decision stated that "the choice of the candidates at the Democratic primary determines the choice of the elective representatives in the Solid-South."

The majority opinion, written by Justice Stone, was viewed in Washington as having great potential significance in coming primary elections.

Justice Douglas submitted a dissent, shared by Justices Black and Murphy, in which the trio conceded Congressional right to deal with primaries, but declared that Congress "through the years" had refused to intrude in this field.

"This court is legislating," Justice Douglas said of the majority opinion.

**Not Vital**

Authorities on election procedure viewed the Stone decision as one of the most vital ever laid down regarding primaries. They even saw under it the possibility of abolishing the poll tax in Southern States, perhaps eventually finding a road to the direct mandatory primary for the selection of the candidates for President and Vice President and also a diminution of the often criticized convention system.

But even more important, if the Federal Government has the power and will use it, the decision will go far toward breaking down the bars which prevent millions of citizens from voting in the deep South.

The control of the primary election is to all intents and purposes the control of the general election and in some states the general election is a mere form.

**Goes In Detail**

"The words of Sections 2 and 4 of Article I (of the Constitution), read in the sense which is plainly permissible and in the light of the Constitutional purposes," Mr. Stone stated, "require us to hold that a primary election which involves a necessary step in the choice of candidates for election of representatives in Congress, and which in the circ es of this case, controls tha is an election within the me the Constitutional provision subject to Congressional re as to the manner of holding

It is the opinion of some ties that while the stab decided in this case which the Texas Primary cases that cision will do much to overr law therein decided, that a party was the master of its m ship and could bar colored citi

—A Colored Judge—

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

## Regulating Primaries

That primaries for the selection of party candidates in a congressional election are subject to federal regulation, just as are general elections, was the ruling of the Supreme Court in an important decision this week.

The opinion was handed down in a case in which five New Orleans officials were accused of altering 97 ballots in last September's Democratic congressional primary in favor of Representative T. Hale Boggs.

There was no disagreement in the Supreme Court over the constitutional right of Congress to legislate against corruption in primaries. But the court was divided as to whether Congress actually had exercised that right.

The majority opinion held that a statute passed in 1870 making it a crime to deprive a citizen of his constitutional rights applied in the case under review. Justice Stone was supported by Justices Frankfurter, Reed and Roberts in this opinion. They held that conspiracy to prevent the official count of a citizen's ballot is "equally a conspiracy to injure and oppress the citizen when the ballots are cast in a primary election" in a congressional contest. The right to participate in the primary, it was held, is within the purposes of the 1870 law just as is the right to vote at the general election.

The minority opinion, written by Justice Douglas and supported by Justices Black and Murphy, maintained that Congress had refused to enter the field of primaries and that the court was legislating in taking the initiative to extend the 1870 law to the primaries. Chief Justice Hughes did not participate in the decision.

Justice Department officials were quoted by The Associated Press following the decision as expressing the belief that the decision indicated the court would "rule that any interference with the rights of Negroes to vote in a primary to determine candidates for federal office violated the federal statute." These officials expressed the belief that the court would hold the 1870 law applicable to political party regulations which bar Negro voters from primaries or which require tests of party regularity.

That constitutional rights of suffrage sometimes may be involved in a primary even as in a general election seems beyond dispute. Whether the 1870 law applied to primaries in a federal election is a question for the court to decide. Its 4-to-3 division shows the difficulty of this particular question. But that Congress has the right to regulate federal primaries was agreed, at least by implication, in a position that we do not think can be effectively assailed.

New York Age
New York, N. Y.

# See Possibility Of Abolishing Poll Taxes As Result Of Decision By Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, D. C.—One of the most far-reaching decisions ever given on primary elections was handed down in the United States Supreme Court, on Monday when complete Congressional power to regular primary elections for the nomination of candidates for federal offices was upheld in a 6 to 3 decision.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Stone, overturned a principle laid down twenty years ago by former Justice McReynolds, when the court refused to sustain the conviction of Truman H. Newberry for irregularities in his Senatorial campaign.

The minority opinion was submitted by Judge Douglas with Justices Black and Murphy concurring. They conceded Congressional right to deal with primaries, but declared that Congress through the years had refused to intrude in this field.

Chief Justice Hughes did not participate in the decision as he was counsel for Senator Newberry and argued in his behalf before the Supreme Court in 1921.

Authorities on election procedures viewed the Stone decision as one of the most vital ever laid down regarding primaries. They even saw under it the possibility of abolishing the poll tax in Southern states, perhaps eventually finding a road to the direct mandatory primary for the election of the candidates for President and Vice President and also a diminution of the often criticized convention system.

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
May 28, 1941

## Negroes in Southern Primaries

The dissenting opinions of three justices of the United States supreme court, Messrs. Douglas, Black and Murphy, from the court's decision that "the congress has the right to legislate against corruption in primaries the same as in general elections" are dissent from the policies of the Roosevelt administration and the New Deal in respect of the negro question in the South.

The Roosevelt administration is democratic. The South is not democratic. The South, in respect to the negroes voting, has clung to "state rights", one of which is to manage its elections.

The decision of the court is, in substance, reaffirmation of the federal policies of "Reconstruction" when the "Radicals", led by Thaddeus Stevens, controlled the congress.

The "belief" was expressed by the department of justice, of which Attorney General Jackson is the head, that "while no suffrage was involved in the case decided the decision indicated that the court would rule any interference with the RIGHTS (our capitals) of negroes to vote in a primary to determine candidates for federal office violated the federal statute".

That means that the court would rule that in South Carolina the white Democrats would not be allowed to exclude negroes from voting in primaries for United States senator and representatives in congress.

It further means that the federal government would have the right to place federal constables at the polls when these primaries are held as it did at the general election polls in the "Reconstruction" period. Were constables not enough it could send soldiers again.

The court's decision is in harmony with other policies of the Roosevelt administration and the New Deal, where the "negro question" is concerned, the decision in the Mitchell or "Jim Crow" case, the decision against racial discrimination in salaries of teachers, for admission of negro students to state supported institutions and so forth. Incidentally, though not necessarily, it points to sympathy with Martin Carpenter's plan for "integration" of white and colored clerks, stenographers, officeholders, in the offices in the District of Columbia, which he would

extend throughout the country.

Further, it indicates general sympathy with the breakdown of social separation of the races illustrated by entertainment of negroes at a tea party in the White House and the entertainment of the president's wife by the pullman car porters at dinner. This breakdown has been more noticeable the last eight years than at any time before since the U. S. Grant administration.

The decision of the court is a pronounced victory, pregnant with enormous possibilities, for democracy—and democracy is impossible of conception if it admits any manner of discrimination or separation of the white and colored races in the United States. (The News and Courier, for that reason if for no other, is not a democratic newspaper. Note the small "d" in "democratic".) The decision is an historic political victory for American negro leaders and their white Northern allies.

Another decision will have to be made, this one by the followers of President Roosevelt and the New Deal in the South. They must decide to bow to the decision of the supreme court, accept the negroes as participants in Southern primaries, or desert the New Deal. This decision may be postponed for a time, but it will have to be made.

That the federal government is more to be relied upon to prevent corruption in primaries in the states than are the states themselves is another question. Recently, the Americans have had before them the example of Louisiana. The late Huey Long was at war with the Roosevelt administration when he was asssassinated September 8, 1935. The state was not receiving federal "benefits". In January following Long's death, with a presidential election to come that year, 1936, the inheritors of Long's political machine and the Roosevelt administration immediately became "friends", federal money poured into the state, stealing took on proportionate expansion, and twenty-five or thirty federal indictments against Big Shots among the Long gangsters were quietly dropped. Thus was presented a repetition of Southern Scalawaggish corruption in magnified scale. Westbrook Pegler called the alliance that the federal administration entered into with Governor "Dick" Leche and other Louisianians the "Second Louisiana Purchase".

Were the Southern New Dealers to desert the federal administration on account of its disposition to introduce the negro vote in primaries and its championship of negroes in other fields, the federal government could put the screws on them by reducing the quantities of money sent to their states and the number of offices given to their friends.

The case is before them.

Jacksonville, Fla., Times-Union
June 5, 1941

## CONTROL OF PRIMARIES

The decision by the Supreme Court of the United States holding that the Federal Government can police State congressional primaries poses new problems for the Southern States that will become more obvious from experience in making the primary rules conform to Federal requirements.

Although the court split four to three in deciding a case from Louisiana, there was no difference as to the principle involved, which means that there is no chance of avoiding the impact of what in effect is newly acquired power of the Federal Government to regulate primary elections.

The Louisiana case involved five election commissioners who were accused of changing ballots in the interest of a congressional candidate. They demurred to the indictment, and were sustained in District Court, but the Supreme Court ruling now forces them to stand trial.

In the majority decision, announced by Justice Stone, the court holds that the protection of the integrity of "elections" provided by Article One of the Constitution must be construed to extend to primaries if the Constitution is not to be read with "stultifying narrowness," and that when this integrity is breached, prosecution under the Criminal Code may follow.

Dissenting, Justice Douglas, joined by Justices Black and Murphy, agreed that Congress has the right to control primaries, but argued that the absence of specific legislation to accomplish this end, leaves regulation with the States themselves.

From the line-up of the justices—Chief Justice Hughes did not participate—it is seen, therefore, that sectional influence had nothing to do with the reasoning behind the court's prevailing opinion. The majority interpreted the Constitution in one way and the minority in another, the latter believing that the court's ruling was in effect legislation by judicial decision.

However, Article One of the Constitution referred to in the opinion contains this section (No. 4):

"The times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to places of choosing Senators."

The next step to be expected from the decision is the drafting of rules required to make it effective. When that stage is reached the real fight may be expected to begin, for it is obvious some of the "friends" of the South who have been for years, taking potshots with their anti-lynching proposals will try to force through provisions covering the qualifications for voting in the primaries.

That, of course, is a right inherent with State sovereignty. Upon it depends the State's right to say who shall be its representative in Congress, and that is a right fully protected by the Constitution.

Thomasville, Ga., Times-Enterprise
June 3, 1941

T 2 48

## ELECTION CONTROL IN THE SOUTH

The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled again against the outh and its manifest and frank effort to preserve white supremacy with state control of its election affairs. This was made possible by the use of the white primary, confined to white voters by the party ogranization that conducts it. The success of the movement is unquestioned and it has undoubtedly prevented a horde of ignorant and easily controlled negroes to become voters in the full purview of the powers ascribed to the electorate.

The South has been tampered with largely in several such decisions, an effort on the part of the party in power to kowtow to the negro vote in the pivotal states. It is done regardless of the effect that it may have on the South. Still there persists the thought that we can divide our allegiance as far as party is concerned, go over to the conservatives and still remain free to dispose of our own affairs as they concern the two races. This may now be said to have been very definitely killed.

Judge Stone on a four to three vote in the Supreme Court delivered the opinion "We think that the authority of congress—includes the authority to regulate primary elections when, as in this case, they are a step in the exercise by the people of their choice of representatives in congress." Heretofore the power of congress was presumed to apply only to general elections and our primary in the South selected the nominee, the general election being merely a casual and almost superficial ratification of the selection.

The New Deal and the liberalized Supreme Court is really putting the cards down face up. They are planning more drastic regulations than we have ever known and we are grateful now as before that the South is Solid. Only in that manner can we hope to reserve our right as they now exist and as all fair minded men know that they should exist. This does not mean that there are not good negroes or sorry white voters. It does mean that the white voter exercises the right of selecting the nominees and they are white. Any conglomerative mixture of white and colored office holders under the stinking political system that we have in this country applied to the South would be too disastrous to consider if there are any means of preventing it.

There is one way of forcing all candidates for the combination to any federal office to only take part in the general election. They could be barred from the primaries that control local and state offices but that would then probably be attacked and in the course of events might also be included by the Supreme Court as it is now constituted in the list of federal controlled projects. The South will not permit this, altho there is every reason to feel that they may have to adopt some modifictaions of the present primary law to bring it about. Every legislature in the South would be immediately convened if there was any federal interference with our election control as a state.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# Anti-Poll Tax Battle Moves Toward Climax

This paper early in its life pointed out that the Poll Tax in the eight states of the South is a bottleneck of democracy—not just democracy in the South, but democracy in the nation. AUG 21 1941

In these states less than one-fourth of the people are able to vote with the result that men are sent to Congress who do not represent the small farmers and workers of their districts. These representatives, with few exceptions, stand united against labor and all progressive legislation. AUG 21 1941

Progressive forces all over the nation are recognizing this danger to American democracy. In the past few days the national conventions of two mighty labor unions—the United Automobile Workers and the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers—have passed resolutions condemning the poll tax and supporting the Pepper-Geyer bill.

And the fight against the poll tax in federal elections is moving rapidly toward a climax. In the Senate, Senator Claude Pepper of Florida reports that his anti-poll tax bill will soon be given a hearing. In the House of Representatives the fight is to get enough signatures on a discharge petition to force the Geyer Bill to the floor for action. It is bottled up in committee by poll tax congressmen, and it will take 218 signatures to bring it up for action. AUG 21 1941

Therefore the immediate fight is to get enough signatures on the Geyer bill discharge petition to bring it to a vote. At the present time the Congressmen are returning to their districts on vacations. It's the opportunity for the people to be heard. Delegations from all organizations which support the Pepper-Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill should visit their Congressman and insist that he sign the discharge petition and support the bill fully. And drop in on your Senators too and demand that they declare themselves in favor of the bill.

Before the cold winds of winter blow a decision on the poll tax will undoubtedly have been made in the courts, too. The United States Supreme Court will give a decision in the Pirtle Case in the fall. This case challenges the constitutionality of the poll tax, and if the court rules favorably it will abolish the poll tax in federal elections. AUG 21 1941

So, the fight against the poll tax in federal elections moves rapidly to a climax. All of us must redouble our efforts. And it's time now to start organizing anti-poll tax clubs in our communities to carry the fight into the state legislatures to end ALL poll tax restrictions on voting.

A FREE ballot is a strong guarantee that the future of FREE America is safe.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.
AUG 21 1941

# POLL TAX HIT AT CONVENTION OF ORE MINERS

AUG 14 1941

The poll tax was roundly condemned in a strong resolution passed unanimously last week by the 38th annual convention of the International Union of Mine, Mill Smelter Workers, (CIO) in session at Joplin, Missouri. Sitting in the convention was the largest group of Southern delegates in the organization's history. But it was shown by enthusiastic support given the resolution from other sections that the whole nation sees the poll tax in the South as a great barrier to true democratic government for the entire country.

Referring to the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill the resolution said in part: AUG 14 1941

"We call upon Congress to pass this legislation immediately as a demonstration against fascism and a reaffirmation of our understanding and belief that democracy can exist only when all people, regardless of their position, have the right to exercise their franchise."

**PROTECT DEMOCRACY**

The convention was addressed by Rev. John B. Thompson, chairman of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, who stressed the need of saving "the democracy we now have" and of going on "developing it to the fulfillment of its promises. We cannot do this Rev. Thompson said "by deserting democracy or putting it aside for the duration of the emergency. We cannot save democracy by surrendering it," he said.

Rev. Thompson paid high tribute to the IUMM&S and its progressive leadership.

**OLD AGE PENSIONS**

Mike Quill, widely famed militant president of Transport Workers Union, urged the smelter workers to promote a broad social program. "We should be working for pensions for our old people," he said "for jobs for our young, for public housing." Referring to the riches the miners bring out of the earth, he deplored the fact that this wealth taken from the land goes to enrich a few.

**The convention adopted resolutions in defense of democratic liberties and severely condemned use of troops to break strikes, as exemplified by the breaking of the North American Aviation strike.**

"What is our major task in our union?" asked Reid Robinson, international president. "To organize the unorganized," he replied to his own question.

He urged greater use of union funds for this purpose. He showed phenomenal growth in membership in the past year amounting to 28,108 initiations and reinstatements. In the past five months, since an increase in per capita tax was made to promote organization, membership increased three times as much as in the first seven months.

During the year the union secured contracts providing for $13,734,104 increase in annual wages, and for several hundred thousand dollars in back time payments.

Marked advances in membership increases in Alabama were noted in President Robinson's report.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

IT'S THE LAW:

# Poll Tax Battle Is Americanism Fight!

AUG 21 1941

THREE-FOURTHS of the people of the South have had the right to vote taken away from them by the poll tax system.

The poll tax system has been analyzed in these columns more than once. It has two essential parts: (1) the poll tax itself, which gives the vote to the rich and denies it to the poor; (2) the registration system, which places in the hands of little committees of machine politicians the power to bar many thousands of persons from the voters' list.

The poll tax system has one basic political content: fear and distrust of the majority of the people.

AUG 21 1941

Every argument that has ever been made and every argument that ever will be made in support of the poll tax system can be reduced to two proportions: (1) Government by "the best people" (aristocracy) is better than government by the people (democracy). (2) "The best people" are the ones who have money.

Both these propositions are contrary to the fundamental spirit of American law.

THE document which is universally recognized as expressing the fundamental spirit of American law is the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution was adopted to frame a government for the independent states which had newly won their freedom from the British Empire. The kind of freedom for which they fought—and the kind of freedom they intended to preserve for the future when they adopted the Constitution—is defined by the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration of Independence, side by side with the Constitution, is itself a part of our fundamental law.

Here is the definition of fundamental Americanism which the Declaration of Independence gives us:

**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED. (our emphasis).**

How else can the powers of government be submitted to the people for their consent than at the ballot box? But the governments of our poll tax states derive their powers from the consent of a minority—about one-fourth of "the governed."

The Declaration of Independence also lists the crimes against liberty committed by King George III of England, which compelled the colonies to break loose from the mother country. One of these crimes is:

**He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly . . . whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise . . .**

Note that the legislative powers are inherent in the people themselves. They are delegated, at the ballot box, to the elected representatives of the people. But the legislative powers inherent in three-fourths of the Southern people have not been delegated to elected representatives.

Another crime charged to George III in the Declaration is:

**He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, A RIGHT INESTIMABLE TO THEM AND FORMIDABLE TO TYRANTS ONLY. (our emphasis).**

AUG 21 1941

And in this year, 1941, three-fourths of the people of the South are denied representation both in the state legislature and in the national Congress, "a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only."

STILL another of the King's offenses against liberty, listed in the Declaration, is **"imposing Taxes on us without our Consent."**

All the American people pay taxes. Those who do not pay them directly at the court house pay indirect taxes, included in the prices of things they have to have to live. But neither the tax laws nor the representatives who make them are submitted to the disfranchised majoriy of the Southern people for their approval.

"Taxation without representation is tyranny" was one of the battle cries of the American revolution. But, today, three-fourths of the people of the South pay taxes imposed on them without their consent by a government in which they have no voice.

AUG 21 1941

The struggle of the people of the South for the vote is a continuation of the peoples' struggle for freedom in 1776. It is a struggle for fundamental Americanism.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# Anti-Poll Tax Drive Finding New Strength

AUG 21 1941

The drive against the poll tax, swinging into an intensive summer campaign under the slogan of "free federal elections in 1942.," has been strengthened by two big forward pushes from the labor movement. International conventions of two of the country's most important unions took action against the poll tax.

First was the 38th annual convention of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, CIO, meeting in Joplin, Mo. Delegates from all parts of the country, including the largest southern delegation in the union's history, voted unanimously to endorse the Pepper-Geyer anti-Poll Tax Bill.

AUG 21 1941

**AGAINST FASCISM**

"We call upon Congress to pass this legislation immediately," said the ore miners' convention, "as a demonstration against fascism and a reaffirmation of our understanding and belief that democracy can only exist when all people, regardless of their position, have the right to exercise their franchise."

Just a few days later, in Buffalo, New York, the auto union parley adopted an anti-poll tax resolution. The United Auto Workers, CIO, with 528,000 members, is the largest union in the United States next to the United Mine Workers, which is also on record against the poll tax.

Meanwhile leaders of the anti-poll tax fight urged that local unions and other organizations interested in democracy use the period in which Congress is in recess to send delegations to see their local Congressman at his home or home office and urge him to join the fight to get the Pepper-Geyer bill on the floor as soon as he gets back to Washington.

Realization that the poll tax affects the whole nation and not the South only became stronger this week due to the activities of a number of Southern poll tax Senators and Congressmen on behalf of appeasement of Hitler.

Typical of this trend was Senator Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel of Texas who joined Sen. Burton K. Wheeler's appeasement bloc in an effort to weaken America's armed forces by defeating the service extension bill.

AUG 21 1941

In the House, one of the amendments offered by the appeasement group in an effort to block service extension was sponsored by Rep. Malcolm C. Tarver of Georgia, another poll tax "statesman."

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# CHARGES GALLUP POLL MISREPRESENTS OPINION OF SOUTH

APR 19 1941

## Southern Conference Challenges Survey Reporting 52 Percent of Southerners Favor Retaining Poll Tax In Eight States—Cites Congressional Record Listing 89 Percent For Geyer Bill.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., April 17.—Charging the Gallup Poll with "misrepresenting the sentiments of the Southern people on the poll tax," an official of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare today challenged Dr. Gallup to prove his reecnt survey reporting 53 per cent of the people in the eight poll tax states as in favor of retaining the poll tax. APR 19 1941

In a letter to the director of the Institute of Public Opinion, Conference Secretary Howard Lee declared that Gallup's survey "would have us believe that the disfranchised majority of Southerns in the poll tax states are fools who desire to remain disfranchised and who have no interest in self-government." APR 19 1941

**CITES SURVEY SHOWING 98 PER CENT FAVOR BILL**

"The Southern people are kept from the polls," Lee stated, "not because they don't want to rule themselves, but simply because they cannot afford to pay the price on the ballot." APR 19 1941

Also questioning Gallup's contention that only 63 per cent of the American people as a whole are in favor of poll tax abolition, the Conference official in his letter to Gallup referred to the reports as printed in the Congressional Record of June 13, 1940, of a poll which reached 4,500,000 people and which showed 89 per cent of the American people as in favor of the Geyer bill to outlaw the poll tax in federal elections.

"Dr. Gallup's admittedly inadequate poll nevertheless demonstrates the necessity of favorable action in the House on the Geyer bill and in the Senate on the Pepper bill," Lee declared.

The Southern Conference was the initial sponsor of the Geyer bill now resting on the speaker's desk until 218 signatures on a discharge petition brings it to the floor for a vote.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# Southerners Challenge Gallup on Poll Tax

APR 11 1941

## Give Evidence Showing Majority Favors Its Abolition

(Special to the Daily Worker)

BIRMINGHAM, April 10.—The accuracy of the Gallup Poll's recent survey in the eight poll tax states of the South which claimed to prove that 53 per cent of the people in these states favored retaining the poll tax, was challenged today by the Southern Conference of Human Welfare. APR 11 1941

In a letter to the director of the Institute of Public Opinion, Conference Secretary Howard Lee charged the Gallup Poll with "misrepresenting the sentiments of the Southern people on the poll tax." Declaring that the survey would "have us believe that the disfranchised majority of the Southerners in the poll tax states are fools who desire to remain disfranchised and who have no interest in sef-government," Mr. Lee stated that the majority of the people in the South are kept from the polls "simply because they cannot afford to pay the price on the ballot."

As an officer of an organization "which initiated and organized the nationwide movement for restoring majority rule in the South through poll tax abolition," Mr. Lee riddled the Gallup Poll's assertions by pointing to the widespread political campaign promises made by Southern office-seekers to abolish the poll tax if elected.

**EMPTY PROMISES**

"The past governor and the present governor of Alabama made campaign promises of poll tax repeal," said the letter to Mr. Gallup. "The entire Tennessee State Administration, headed by Governor Cooper, was elected with this poll tax repeal plank prominent in their platforms. The Democratic and Republican parties in Tennessee, representing almost all the voters in the state, endorsed poll tax repeal. In like manner the governors of Mississippi, Texas, Virginia and other poll tax states owe their election in no small degree to the fact that they spoke out against keeping a price on the ballot. These facts demonstrate that a majority of those who have paid their poll tax are for its abolition because they have VOTED for its abolition."

Challenging the survey which combined the vote of persons who have paid their taxes and are eligible to vote with "persons of voting age, who through failure to pay the poll tax, are not eligible to vote," the Conference secretary declared: "Having travelled through the South for many years and knowing the attitude of my fellow Southerners on this question of poll tax abolition, I cannot allow the honesty of your survey to go unchallenged." APR 11 1941

The survey had claimed that the combined sentiments of these two groups showed the following results:

For abolishing the poll tax..35%
For retaining the poll tax....53%
No opinion..... 7%

"One conclusion alone about the Southern people can be reached if we accept the findings of your survey; namely, that the disfranchised majority of non-poll tax payers are fools who have no interest in self-government, and who desire to remain disfranchised. The truth of my statement is obvious even though you do not give us the vote of the non-poll tax payers alone, for otherwise how could we account for the 4 per cent increase in your total 53 per cent as compared to what is noted above." (The Gallup Poll among persons who have paid their poll tax showed: For the poll tax 34 per cent; against the poll tax 49 per cent; no opinion, 7 per cent.)

**89 PER CENT OPPOSE**

"To our knowledge," stated the letter, "practically all of the organizations of the people living in the eight poll tax states have declared themselves for poll tax repeal Farm organizations are opposed to the poll tax. Organized labor and the Negro population are known for their strong anti-poll tax sentiments. Practically all women's societies and clubs likewise have gone on record for freeing the ballot Just who are the people your reporters interviewed, Dr. Gallup? And how many people were included in the survey?"

Concluding his letter with reference to the poll on the same question conducted by the Emergency Conference for Democratic Rights and which was included in the Congressional Record of June 13, 1940, Mr. Lee declared that these "samplings" of opinion of all social, racial, regional and economic groups in some 35 states, found that 89 per cent of the American people are in favor of abolition of the poll tax. Out of 4,603,722 persons reached by the poll, 4,116,673 are reported as being in favor of the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill, and only 236,422 reported as being opposed to the bill which would outlaw the poll tax in federal elections. These findings refute, it seems to me, the finding of your admittedly inadequate survey that only 63 per cent of the people throughout the United States are for abolishing the poll tax."

News
Birmingham, Ala.

## Why Poll Taxes Stand

APR 14 1941

The findings of the Gallup poll on the poll tax are something of a blow to champions of electoral reform. Persons of voting age in the entire nation, it is true, favored freeing the vote from the poll tax. But in the eight Southern states which constitute the last stronghold of the poll-tax prerequisite to the ballot, a majority wanted to continue forcing each citizen to pay his dollar or more before voting. Dr. Gallup's report points out that the figures for the poll-tax area have not been broken down by states. When he has taken larger samples, from which reliable state-by-state estimates can be made, maybe the picture will show some bright spots. There have been indications of a powerful reform movement in Virginia, where an intensive newspaper campaign has been working on the public and where three of the four candidates for the governorship favor a change. But on the basis of the present report, it would seem that the Geyer bill to remove federal elections forcibly from the grip of the poll tax offers the greatest hope of immediate improvement over the whole region. APR 14 1941

This is unfortunate, for it appears that Congress will have to impose a democratic measure which the states themselves might adopt if the people understood the situation. The arguments reported by Gallup interviewers show that the objectors to poll-tax reform had no idea of the issues or of what is proposed to do about them. One woman wanted to keep the levy because "poll taxes help pay for the schools." She did not know that most plans for a free vote entail keeping the poll tax, but making it independent of the ballot box. Under this system the poll tax would yield much more revenue for schools than at present. A farmer thought we had "better keep the poll tax because if we don't have it some people will just vote 'cause somebody gives 'em a bottle of whisky or a dollar bill." The condition he was describing, sad to relate, is exactly that which exists now in his poll-taxed state. There, a stony-broke man can't vote unless somebody gives him a dollar bill—with minute instructions as to how he shall mark the ballot.—Washington Post.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

## Poll Tax Is Not American

APR 18 1941

The tide of public opinion has set against the poll tax. Once defended on the ground that the citizen without property ought to contribute something to the support of government, this measure is out of favor except in the eight southern states that continue it. Other southern states are of the same mind as the rest of the country in thinking it

should be abolished.

Some form of tax is paid by everybody—and always was. It was never true as claimed that without a poll tax some persons did not support government. The poll tax was simply a direct demand, the outward and visible sign of the state's right to a part of the earnings of the people it protected. Today with income taxes federal and state, "nuisance" tax on many articles of general consumption, and sales tax in many states, a direct tax per head is no longer to be excused on the ground that only through a poll tax will some citizens pay their share.

The poll tax in the eight states restrains Negroes' voting. That is the real reason it is kept.

But at the same time that the poll tax is deterring Negroes from voting, it also cuts down the white vote. Poor whites are not anxious enough to vote to pay for it. Disfranchisement, like every other injustice crosses the color line. Because the southern elections are only a matter of form, the Democratic primary, a strictly white affair taking its place, poor whites have not realized how the poll tax cheats them too of their birthright.

APR 18 1941

Democracy is dead, whenever the people do not participate in public decisions. No matter what the reason, the principle is sacrificed. No revenue can justify such a loss, and most certainly not the small amount which a poll tax produces. Too bad the eight southern states which cling to it think less of American principles than they do of their pet hate.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# Dixie Group Chides Dr. Gallup's Survey Of Poll Tax Opinion

APR 19 1941

Even if we did not have this evidence, Dr. Gallup, it could readily be ascertained that the great majority of citizens in every Southern state wish to vote and would do so if it were not for the poll tax requirement. We could go back to the period between 1880 and the 1900's when the poll tax system was imposed on the Southern people to combat the popularity of the Populist Party among the poor whites and Negroes and prove beyond any question the active desire of our people to have a voice in their government.

**Again quoting Mr. Evans: "In 1888, the last presidential election in which the Tennesseeans were free to vote their will," he said, "90 per cent of the adult population expressed a choice at the polls." But by 1940, Mr. Evans continued, "less than one-third of the potential voters—less than three out of ten—cast a ballot."**

APR 19 1941

Lack of space does not allow us to discuss in great detail the many other questions raised by the results of your survey. However, we would like to inquire just where and how your field reporters got their figures?

**To our knowledge practically all of the organizations of the people living in the eight poll tax states have declared themselves for poll tax repeal. Farm organizations are opposed to the poll tax. Organized labor and the Negro population are known for their strong anti-poll tax sentiments. Practically all women's societies and clubs likewise have gone on record for freeing the ballot.**

APR 19 1941

Just who are the people your reporters interviewed, Dr. Gallup? And how many people were included in your survey?

**In conclusion, I would like to call your attention to a report of another poll on this question which appeared in the Congressional Record of June 13, 1940. This poll, conducted by the Emergency Conference for Democratic Rights, and including samplings of opinion of all social, racial, regional and economic groups in some 35 states, found that 89 per cent of the American people are in favor of abolition of the poll tax. Out of 4,603,722 persons reached by the poll, 4,116,673 are reported as being in favor of the Geyer-Anti-Poll Tax Bill, and only 236,422 are reported as being opposed to this bill which would outlaw the poll tax in federal elections. These findings refute, it seems to me, the finding of your admittedly inadequate survey that only 63 per cent of the people throughout the United States are for abolishing the poll tax.**

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# SEN. PEPPER WANTS POLL TAX ABOLISHED

APR 12 1941

WASHINGTON, April 10.—Southern support was given to the fight to abolish the poll tax in eight States of the South as a prerequisite to voting in Federal elections when Senator Claude Pepper, Democrat, of Florida, introduced last Wednesday a companion bill to the Geyer anti-poll tax bill which is pending in the House.

APR 12 1941

Florida threw off the poll tax in 1938. The eight Southern States which still retain it are Tennessee, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Texas. It operates to disfranchise a great majority of the people in those States.

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

# The Constitution And The Poll Tax

APR 15 1941

The poll tax battle is on. I take my stand.

I agree with Mrs. Roosevelt that every individual is entitled to a vote. I believe in universal suffrage—the right of every man and woman, being 21 years of age, to vote in local, State and Federal elections. When I say universal, I mean universal: I mean black and white and all intermediate stades; I mean illiterates, paupers, habitual drunkards, neurotics, idiots, morons, lunatics, criminals and reationaries. I would exclude only those with ascertainable ape blood. Noisy lunatics and confined criminals could vote by absentee ballot—that would not be the first time that criminals and lunatics ever voted by an absentee ballot.

APR 15 1941

I could not believe anything else and be loyal to the Constitution of the United States. If I did not believe in absolute universal suffrage I would launch immediately a campaign for repeal of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments.

Any limitation of suffrage debases rather than dignifies democracy.

I am profoundly opposed to the substitution of a literacy test for the poll tax. A tricky manipulation of a literacy test by unscrupulous politicians could disenfranchise more people than the poll tax—and it would save the politicians the expense of block payments of poll taxes.

APR 15 1941

The expedient preelection enthusiasm of candidates for repeal will shortly evanesce after election. Beneficiaries of the poll tax just can't get very excited about the issue, because the retention of the poll tax is essential to their political survival. Besides, the process for amending our State constitution is cumbersome and unwieldly, requiring four years at least.

I direct your attention to the forgotten clause of our Federal Constitution:

**Amendment 14, Section 2:**

"Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of Electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being 21 years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens 21 years of age in such State."

APR 15 1941

I challenge lawyer or layman to tell me what this clause of the Federal Constitution means if it does not mean what it says. This is an outright outlawry of the poll tax as a prerequisite to voting in both State and Federal elections. Here we have the prohibition and the penalty for its violation. How can Congress think otherwise, how can the Supreme Court hold otherwise?

The proper execution of this clause would give Virginia three Representatives instead of nine—leaving six potential Governors.

William Lloyd Garrison—the advocate of action—knew more about the slave issue than Henry Clay—the champion of compromise. The Southern Electoral Reform League would do well to take cognizance of this historical fact.

Appeasing the "liberal" press and currying favor with demagogues are not repealing the poll tax.

For five years, as an individual, I have fought the poll tax. I shall continue my individual battle.

HOWARD CARWILE.
Charlotte Courthouse, Va., April 12

New Republic
New York, N. Y.

# Southern Gentlemen Preferred

FOR THE SECOND TIME within six months, death has dramatized with disturbing clarity a problem which has haunted the New Deal from its earliest days—the effects of the seniority rule on the leadership of Congress in a Democratic administration.

Last fall the chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, left vacant by the death of Senator Key Pittman, went by the rule of seniority to Senator Walter F. George of Georgia, one of the Senators whom the President had sought to purge in the campaign of 1938. By the same rule, chairmanship of the Committee on Military Affairs has now been handed over to Senator Robert Reynolds of North Carolina, described by the careful New York Times as "a man completely out of sympathy with his party majority, the congressional majority, the administration and the expressed public opinion of the country on the subject of national defense."

Under the unwritten rule of seniority, the chairmanship of each committee in Congress is given to the member of the majority party who has the longest *unbroken* record of service on the committee. A new member, no matter what his qualifications, must begin at the bottom of the list, with promotion depending upon the physical or political death of someone who arrived earlier. A single defeat sends him back to the bottom of the list, no matter how long his previous service.

This subordination of all other qualifications to the length of uninterrupted service has given to the "solid South" a dominating position during Democratic administrations out of all proportion to its population and geographic importance.

The reasons for this are obvious. Due to the lack of any effective Republican opposition in the South, the Democratic candidates in those states are practically certain of election, even in overwhelmingly Republican years. While their colleagues in other states are swept out with the tide, the Southern members move on up the list, filling the vacancies left by those who may return with another swing of the political pendulum but who must, because of one defeat, begin at the bottom.

In 1920, for example, 121 of the 131 Democrats who survived the Republican landslide were from Southern states, and when the Democrats regained control of the House in 1931, 16 out of 22 important committee chairmanships went to Southerners. In the present session of Congress, after ten years of Democratic control of the House, the number is fifteen. In the Senate, thirteen of twenty-three important chairmanships are held by Southerners. Where a chairmanship is held by a non-Southerner, a Dixie representative is likely to be ranking member, which means that he receives important subcommittee chairmanships and serves on conference committees to iron out differences between House and Senate on legislation passed.

Prior to the New Deal, the effects of the seniority principle upon congressional policy were not so apparent. With the split in the Democratic Party, however, we have had ample opportunity to examine its potentialities for obstruction, as an administration elected by overwhelming popular majorities has found itself balked on more than one occasion by the concentration of congressional leadership in the hands of persons who, although elected under the same party banner, were often no less unsympathetic with its aims than members of the opposition party.

In attacking the seniority principle, we cast no reflections on our constitutional forefathers. The rule developed quite informally as a matter of custom in the Senate and did not come into use in the House until 1911, when it was accepted as an alternative to the arbitrary rule of "Uncle Joe" Cannon. Its chief advantages are that it assigns leadership to members familiar with the processes of Congress and avoids the disruptive effects of an irresponsible scramble for place.

The first of these is largely discounted by the passing over of any experience that is not matched with a long and unbroken record in Congress. As for the matter of intra-party quarrels, surely the people of the United States have a right to ask for something better as a solution than a system which can encompass such a flagrant violation of the representative principle as the appointment of Senator Reynolds to the chairmanship of the Committee on Military Affairs.

New Republic
New York, N. Y.

## News Notes of a Week

Reversing a twenty-year-old decision, the Supreme Court voted 4 to 3 that Congress has power to regulate primary elections. The ruling might mean the end of the poll tax and drastic change in the system of nominating presidential candidates by the present party conventions. . . . FDR signed the 85-percent-parity farm-loan bill. . . . The Federal Trade Commission ordered Hearst Magazines, Inc., "to cease and desist from misrepresentations" in connection with the "seal of approval" issued by Good Housekeeping. The end of a long battle. . . . Leon Henderson set a ceiling on cotton-yarn prices 20 percent below current prices, but far above costs. "What is left of our democracy?" mourned "Cotton Ed" Smith, South Carolina Senator. . . . Colleges will offer a three-year course next fall, to enable students to graduate before being called for military service.

Pierre Laval told a New York Times reporter that he gained Hitler's confidence because he too "spoke the language of the new Europe." But some Frenchmen still admire French. . . . A Franco decree gave the Falange Party complete control of press, radio and moving pictures. For propaganda against the United States and Britain? . . . The British forces, nearing Bagdad, seemed to be getting the upper hand in Irak. . . . Through a Tokyo newspaper, Admiral Raeder of Germany warned that any naval aid to Great Britain by the United States would be a plain act of war. Note FDR's reply, page 743, this issue.

Tribune
Philadelphia, Pa.

# Supreme Court Decision In Primary Elections May Aid Voteless Millions

THE United States Supreme Court is eternally correct in its decision that the Federal government's power to regulate elections includes a State primary to select a nominee for Congress.

From many points of view a primary election is more important than the general election. In many sections of the United States the primary election is THE election. This is absolutely true in the States known as the Solid South. The individual who is nominated in the Democratic Primary in these States is ELECTED to all intents and purposes.

While the case from which the decision grew did not directly involve colored citizens, it is a decision which is apparently contra to former decisions in the Texas Primary Cases, which held that a political party was a private organization and, therefore, could regulate its membership so as to bar citizens who were not white.

There was violent disagreement with that opinion of the Supreme Court, for the reason that primary elections are handled by the same officials who control the general elections and are paid for by the State, which should immediately indicate that it is a public and not a private club.

This decision should be carefully studied so as to determine whether or not it can be used as a lever to secure the ballot for the voteless millions in the Solid South.

Dothan, Ala. Eagle
May 27, 1941

## Here It Comes

The United States Supreme Court, in a 4 to 3 decision which found Alabama-born Justice Hugo Black among the dissenters, has ruled that State primaries and conventions are subject to Federal regulation along with general elections. To reach their decision the Justices rummaged through the laws of the land until they came upon one adopted in 1870, which Congress had passed to implement the 14th amendment giving the Negro the right to vote in general elections.

Justices Black, Douglas and Murphy contended in their minority opinion that when the 1870 law was passed there were no State primaries and that the court is now legislating when it seeks to extend the old law to State primaries.

Regardless of how right the dissenters may be, the fact is as prominent as a sore thumb that the fat is in the fire in so far as it concerns those Southern States which have erected barriers preventing the enfranchisement of Negroes through the medium of party conventions and State primaries. Carried to its logical conclusion the Federal government will now step into the picture and deny the States the right to set up qualifications for electors and will throw the polls open to Negroes.

While the question of admitting Negroes to primaries was not being considered by the court, Justice Department officials accepted the decision as indication that the court would subsequently "rule that any interference with the rights of Negroes to vote in a primary to determine candidates for Federal offices violated the Federal statute."

Unless those Southern States which have large Negro populations can find some method of setting up new regulations which are within the law it is a foregone conclusion that another era of political strife not unlike that of the carpetbagger days is in the offing. This is particularly true of Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi where enfranchisement of Negro voters will upset a party system which has protected white supremacy. These States will be a fertile field for the demagogues and political polecats who will flock to this region to woo the Negro vote.

There is trouble ahead for the South, and make no mistake about it. The next thing we'll hear is that someone has taken a case to the Supreme Court challenging the validity of poll taxes. Judging from its decision in the current case it may be expected to remove this "restriction" also.

All of which will be quite pleasing to the reddish Southern Conference For Human Welfare and to that feller Pepper from Florida who has been shedding alternate tears for anti-poll tax legislation and dropping bombs on Tokyo. With the Supreme Court working on his side to help remove white supremacy he can devote more of his time to helping favored contractors get all the gravy from defense expenditures in Florida.

There are some mighty smart lawyers and legislators in the South and they'd better get busy.

## Control Of Primaries

The Supreme Court's decision that Federal penalties may be involved against voting frauds in a Louisiana primary for the selection of congressional candidates may have a profound effect upon our election machinery. There is no clear indication as to how far the Court will go in permitting use of this post-Civil War statute to stamp out present-day corruption at the polls. But Monday's opinion by Justice Stone left no question as to the Government's ability to punish individuals for falsely counting ballots in a primary election vital to the choice of national legislators.

Congress has often hesitated in making legislation applicable to primary elections because of uncertainty as to its powers in this field. That uncertainty has now been removed. Justice Stone points out that the general purpose and the letter of the Constitution "require us to hold that a primary election which involves a necessary step in the choice of candidates for election as representatives in Congress . . . is an election within the meaning of the constitutional provision and is subject to congressional regulation as to the manner of holding it." Even the dissenting opinion by Justice Douglas, in which Justices Black and Murphy joined, takes a similar view. To many laymen it will appear that the court merely states the obvious. Nominating primaries have come to be an integral part of the American election system. Indeed, as Justice Stone makes clear, primaries in the South are the decisive step in the selection of Congressmen. And no spliting of hairs as between a final election and a primary would conform to the spirit of a Constitution intended to serve the Nation for all time.

The point which brought a four-to-three division in the court concerns the applicability of the statute—a product of the Reconstruction Era. It provides stiff penalties for persons who "conspire to injure, oppress, threaten or intimidate any citizen in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or laws of the United States." Because Congress has not passed general legislation to regulate primaries, the dissenting justices conclude that the alleged corruption in Louisiana should be left to action by the State. They object to criminal convic-

Greenville, S. C. News
May 28, 1941

## THE NEGRO AND PRIMARIES

A decision of far-reaching importance to many Southern states, and particularly to South Carolina, is that handed down Monday by the United States Supreme Court holding that primary elections for the nomination of candidates for federal offices are subject to federal regulation.

The Court holds in this decision that all rights and privileges guaranteed by the constitution shall apply to primaries and general elections with equal force; and is regarded as a reversal in some respects at least of the decision in the Truman Newberry case from Michigan in 1921 when the primary was held to be not an "election" within the meaning of the Constitution.

This decision, growing out of a New Orleans case, is regarded by the Washington news writers as holding beyond doubt that even in primaries held by party organizations, negroes must have the same right to participate as they have in the general elections; in other words negroes cannot be excluded from the primary on any racial grounds. Further the decision appears, as interpreted in press dispatches, to hold that the act of 1870 which imposes fines or imprisonment upon election officers for refusing to permit negroes to vote, is applicable to the party primaries as well as to general elections.

If the press summaries have accurately interpreted the effect of this decision, it would appear that South Carolina's "Democratic party" can no longer be considered a "white man's party" for the purpose of choosing public officers, but that negro citizens must be permitted to participate in its primaries under the same rules and regulations that govern the participation of white citizens. While the Court's decision applies specifically to primaries to select federal officers, it would appear probable that it would also govern any other party primaries; and in any event, practically speaking it would apply to the enrollment for all South Carolina primaries in regular election years since every district in the state has to elect a member of the national House every two years.

We await with keen interest the repercussions and "reactions" to this decision in the editorial offices of the Charleston *News and Courier*.

52e-1941
Southern News
almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# Southerners Push Poll Tax Battle; Bill Up In Senate

APR 3 - 1941

## PRESSURE GETS RESULTS; PEPPER SPONSORS BILL; 2 SIGN PETITION

The solid front of opposition to poll tax repeal by Southern congressmen this week was cracking before the mounting demand of Dixie's farmers and working people to restore their democracy.

In a week of rapid events in the fight for poll tax repeal these developments stood out:

1. Twenty five congressmen, including two southerners from poll tax states, signed the petition to bring the Geyer Bill out of the House Judiciary Committee for action.

2. Senator Claude Pepper of Florida introduced a slightly different poll tax repeal bill in the Senate.

Major interest centered in the action of the two southerners in coming to the support of the anti-poll tax bill sponsored by Rep. Lee E. Geyer of California. They were Reps. Joseph Bryson of South Carolina and B. Carroll Reese of Tennessee.

APR 3 - 1941

### DIRT FARMER

In Bryson's action was a symbol of the surging new movement to restore majority rule in the South. He is representative of the industrial area surrounding Greenville, S. C., where in 1934 textile workers rallied behind Olin D. Johnston, a former overalls cotton mill worker, and turned the anti-labor state administration of Gov. Ibra C. Blackwood out of power. But Bryson himself came from a farming community in upper Greenville county called Travelers Rest, an area almost exclusively of small, one-family farms and it was the single purpose of these small farmers and mill workers to wipe out boss rule that sent young Joe Bryson to Congress.

APR 3 - 194

He was urged to sign the Geyer Bill petition by the folks back home. Local 268 of the Textile Workers Union in Greenville wired the congressman to support the bill. H. E. McConnell, president of the local, states that Mr. Bryson was once a cotton mill worker himself and that he has supported measures for the people at all times.

APR 3 - 1941

Reese of Tennessee, like Bryson, comes from a community of small and poor farmers and workers-in-overalls. He went to Congress from the Knoxville area, country of coal miners, family-sized farms and city industrial workers.

### NOT CLEAR

The position of Senator Pepper, in introducing a Senate bill was not entirely clear. The Floridian came forward as a supporter of poll tax reform at the Southern Conference for Human Welfare in Birmingham in 1939. He declared, however, that he desired to "study" the question of whether poll tax reform should be undertaken by passage of a law or by a constitutional amendment before acting.

As the Roosevelt administration moved nearer to war, Senator Pepper appeared to become less interested in the poll tax question (he was a leader in the administration's fight for a draft law and for the Lend-Lease Bill) and up to last week, so far as his friends knew he was still "studying" the poll tax question.

### PRIMARIES INCLUDED

Pepper's bill differs from the Geyer bill in that it would outlaw poll taxes as a requirement for voting in both primary elections and general elections while the Geyer bill relates only to general elections. While plain folks in the South want the tax abolished in both elections, there is some feeling that if both steps are undertaken at the same time the Supreme Court might declare the law unconstitutional on a basis of the theory that states have control over regulations governing primary elections.

With this in mind, Howard Lee, executive secretary of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, wired Senator Pepper asking if the bill carried a separability clause. (This would require that the constitutionality of each clause of the bill be determined separately). Senator Pepper wired that "my bill . . . does not contain separability clause. That can be put in and will be put in later."

The Pepper bill—S. 1280—was introduced Monday and was referred to the Judiciary Committee, whose chairman is Senator Van Nuys of Indiana. Norris of Nebraska is the ranking member of the committee.

APR 3 - 1941

GENERAL

News
Birmingham, Ala.

## Anti-Poll Tax Bill

Senator Pepper has introduced his bill to prohibit the collection of poll taxes as a prerequisite to voting in any federal election. His measure states that such a levy "has no reasonable relation to the intelligence, ability, character, wealth, community consciousness or other qualifications of voters"—an excellent summary of the undemocratic characteristics of this price-tag on ballots.

APR 6 - 1941

Florida, of course, has already enjoyed some of the benefits of abolishing this restriction on voting, but many citizens, if not machine politicians, in the eight Southern states which still retain the poll tax requirement will applaud Senator Pepper's efforts.

A bill introduced at the last session of the Georgia Legislature to abolish the poll tax requirement in all elections in that state was killed in committee, but it gathered an unexpected amount of support and its death is nothing that the committee members can be proud of.

"You know and I know," declared the author of the bill in speaking on it from the floor of the Georgia House, "that it's a common practice for us to pay poll taxes for people who'll vote for us. There are people in my county who want to vote, but who don't vote because that poll tax means taking the cost of food out of their children's mouths. I challenge the committee to let this issue come to a vote so that each legislator will be put on record."

He didn't get the roll call, but the fact that committee members blocked it presented further evidence to Georgians that corrupt practices which cannot stand the light of exposure have grown up around the poll tax requirement, just as they existed in Florida before it was repealed, and as they will exist anywhere that a price, no matter how small, is placed on the right of the free ballot.

APR 6 - 1941

Senator Pepper and Representative Geyer, of California, in the House, are commendably seeking to strengthen democracy at home, and the members of Congress from states which still levy the voting tax should be required to declare their stand on this subject.—Tampa Times.

Guardian
Boston, Mass

ANTI-POLL TAX BILL

MAY 10 1941

Congressman Geyer's Anti-Poll Tax Bill (H.R. 1024) is "bottled up" in the House Judiciary Committee. In the eight States where the poll tax is a requirement for voting — Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.—there is a large volume of sentiment favoring repeal of the tax; the persons who want the poll tax retained outnumber the repealists by only 5 to 3, according to a Gallup Poll. But throughout the North and West and in the five southern states which have no poll tax requirement majority sentiment is decidedly in favor of abolishing the tax.

It will require the signatures of 218 Congressmen to a petition to liberate the Anti-Poll Tax Bill and bring it to the floor of the House for a vote. Congressman Geyer seems convinced that the necessary support for the passage of the bill can be enlisted if voters in the North and West bring their influence to bear by writing and telegraphing their Congressmen to sign Discharge Petition No. 1 and to vote for the bill. "The anti-lynching bill passed the House last year with the support of 262 Congressmen," Mr. Geyer reminds us, "If the same Congressmen will support the anti-poll tax bill, I am sure that it will be possible for the bill with the backing of Senator Pepper of Florida to scale the hurdle in the Senate."

MAY 10 1941

Passage of the anti-poll-tax bill will restore the franchise to 10 million colored and white voters who are kept from voting in the South through their inability to pay the burdensome poll tax. With the ballot they can defend themselves from their exploiters who perpetuate themselves in power by dividing and weakening their opponents through the operation of the poll tax and allied devices. Let all of us give Congressman Geyer the cooperation he needs to carry his fight to a successful finish. We can best help the cause of the South's disfranchised by demanding of our representatives in Congress that they sign the discharge petition to bring the anti-poll tax bill to the floor of the House for a vote and that they work and vote for its passage. Don't put off! Mean business; do it now!

Dothan, Ala. Eagle
April 3, 1941

# Pepper Runs Out

It long since ceased to be a novelty for Northern Congressmen to foster legislation designed to humiliate the South and to legalize injustices against its people. Rarely does Congress meet that some Northern politician, mindful of the heavy Negro vote in his particular district, does not aim a vicious piece of legislation at what they believe to be the conquered province of the South. Along with destructive tariffs, freight rate barriers and inadequate agricultural legislation, the South has become accustomed to the annual effort to put over anti-lynch laws. In the past, however, these attacks against the South have come from Northern politicians and not from those representing the people below the Mason-Dixon line.

But that picture has changed. One of its native sons has gone into the camp of the enemy and has offered a bill in the Senate to remove the poll tax restriction in all national elections. Not a Westerner, a New Englander, or one from New York's East Side—but a native of Alabama. Just in case you haven't already guessed who that gentleman is, he is Senator Claude Pepper of Florida.

So far as the South is concerned it's all right for Congressman Geyer and others of his ilk to get ants in their pants and tears in their eyes about poll tax restrictions in the South. It's all right for them to try to pass sectional legislation in the form of anti-lynch laws. The South knows that the Negro votes in their districts encourage them to be demagogues and offer legislation which they know is unfair. And the South also knows that in the minds of many Congressmen representing Northern districts it is just and right that the South be kept subdued, that it be ground under the heels of those who still resent the shellacking their grandfathers got before Lee was finally exhausted.

However, when a Southern Senator forgets what white supremacy means and joins hands with those who would saddle us with Negro rule, we are staggered—and we wonder why.

Senator Pepper, the man who wants to outlaw poll taxes and invite every person past 21 years of age to vote in national elections, was born at Dudleyville, Alabama in 1900. In Alabama he received most of his formal education, an education made possible by poll taxes paid by persons who valued their citizenship. Well does Senator Pepper know that Alabama would have had no schools for him to attend had its white citizens not thrown off the yoke of the carpetbaggers by restricting voting to those who would pay for the privilege. Well does he knows that if it were not for poll taxes Negroes would rule elections in many Alabama communities, that instead of white teachers such as those who taught the Senator there would be Negroes.

Claude Pepper spent enough time in rural Alabama to know full well that any abridgement of white supremacy will not work and that when the barriers are removed there will be racial strife where now there is harmony. Even the wise Negro leaders know this to be true.

The Florida Senator has had easy sailing under the New Deal. Often he has been chosen to send up trial balloons for the administration. This may be another of the long-haired professors' trial balloons and it may not get very far when the Senate begins to debate it. But it may be accepted as a foregone conclusion that the Pepper bill will have the blessings of the administration and if there is a sufficient show of strength to make them believe it has a chance of passage, the Presidential heat will be turned on.

Senator Pepper apparently has forgotten the history he learned as a student in the poll-tax supported schools of Alabama. If he has we would like to suggest that he get down a copy of Claude Bowers' "Tragic Era." After re-reading that factual document on reconstruction in the South, we believe Senator Pepper will forget federal patronage for the moment and let his thoughts again dwell on the welfare of the people among whom he was reared.

Atlanta, Ga. Journal
April 30, 1941

# GREGORY

## Reviews History of Four-Year Term Legislation in Georgia

By C. E. GREGORY

THE HOUR has struck when the people of Georgia should begin serious study of the 69 proposed amendments to the State Constitution upon which they must cast their ballots June 3.

Fortunately the vast majority of the proposed amendments are local in their interest and effect, authorizing various counties, cities and political subdivisions to issue refunding bonds or to increase their debts beyond the constitutional limitation.

There are proposed amendments, however, which vitally affect the set-up of the State government, and which should be given careful consideration by those who expect to participate in the June general election.

Take the four-year term amendment, for example.

This amendment, providing a four-year term instead of the present two years for the governor, secretary of state, treasurer, comptroller general and attorney general, was a Talmadge administration measure. It was the ninth resolution introduced in the House of Representatives on the first bill day of the 1941 session and was sponsored by Speaker Randall Evans, Floor Leader J. W. Culpepper, Representative Lovett of Laurens County and Representative Blease of Brooks County. Naturally it received full administration support. The Senate passed it by a vote of 47 to 0 after the House had approved it by a vote of 18[illegible] to 2.

Although Governor Talmadge had recommended a maximum salary of $5,000 per annum for all state officials, and the Legislature had voted to reduce the income of other constitutional officials to that figure, friends of the Governor permanently fixed his salary at $7,500 in the four-year term resolution. If the amendment is adopted the salary of the Governor never can be changed without another constitutional amendment.

### Arguments Advanced

At the same time political opponents of the present Governor wrote into the proposed amendment a provision that the measure shall not affect the terms of officials elected in 1940.

Under the provisions of the amendment the first election for a four-year term will be held on Tuesday after the first Monday in November, 1942, and quadrennially thereafter.

Proponents of the four-year term bill argued that it would eliminate politics from the Executive Department because of the provision that a four-year-term governor cannot succeed himself. They insisted that under the two-year rule a governor lights on his feet and begins running again immediately after his inauguration. They also contended that the offer of a four-year term at the expense of only one campaign would attract more able candidates for governor and other constitutional offices.

Opponents of the measure contend that any public official should be willing to give the people an accounting of his stewardship as often as they desire it. They shudder at the thought of having had some past governors twice as long as they did have them. They point to the refusal of former governors to call extra sessions of the Legislature in the middle of their terms for fear they might be impeached. They insist that the constitutional provision permitting the Legislature to convene itself offers little relief because of the requirement that two-thirds of both branches must sign the call.

The history of four-year terms in Georgia is not very encouraging to those who want the constitutional amendment passed.

### One Four-Year Term

I do not believe many Georgians know that this State has had one four-year term governor and three-fourths of another one.

A four-year term for the governor of Georgia was crammed down the protesting gullets of the people of this State by a Constitutional Convention which convened on December 9, 1867, on call of Major Gen. John Pope, U. S. A., commander of the Third Military District, comprising Georgia, Florida and Alabama. The convention had been authorized by a vote of 106,410 to 102,283, with most white people refusing to vote at all.

This Constitutional Convention was composed of 133 white men and 33 Negroes, the latter freshly emancipated and given citizenship. They adopted the Constitution of 1868, which gave the governor a four-year term.

"The convention adjourned amid the curses of the people, and the campaign which followed upon the question of its adoption and the election of officials under it was the bitterest ever waged in Georgia," writes Walter McElreath in his historical book on the Constitution of Georgia.

However, the Constitution was ratified by a vote of 89,007 to 71,309 and Rufus Brown Bullock, the carpet-bagger, was elected as Georgia's first four-year term governor. Bullock served as governor from July 21, 1868, until October 30, 1871, when he resigned. Benjamin Conley, President of the State Senate, served until a special election was held. James M. Smith, chosen in the special election, served the only full four-year term of any Georgia governor, from January 11, 1873, until January 12, 1877.

Native Georgians regained control of their State again and hastily put back the two-year term for governors in the Constitution of 1877.

An amendment providing four-year terms was defeated by a vote of 117,434 to 76,164 as recently as November 3, 1936.

News
Birmingham, Ala.

## Pay Your Poll Tax

JAN 21 1941

Birmingham people who wish to vote in the city primaries in May, but who have not yet registered and paid their poll taxes, will be able to qualify as voters if they pay poll taxes on or before Feb. 1. They can register with the Board of Registrars when the board meets in February.

Hundreds of young men and women who have become of voting age in recent years should be instructed by parents, employers, Sunday School teachers, college instructors and others interested in promoting civic welfare on proper procedure for becoming qualified voters.

Poll taxes can be paid now at the courthouse, and later booths will be set up at several vantage points in the county. But those who do not understand procedure for becoming qualified voters can learn by a visit to the tax collector's office or the Board of Registrars at the courthouse.

There may come a day in Alabama when the cumulative poll tax features will be abolished, but that time does not appear to be in the near future. Those who owe back poll taxes will be doing their duty if they pay the back taxes and the $1.50 current tax and qualify as voters.

It should be remembered that the money from poll tax collections goes to the schools, and that complaining about the tax will not give one a voice in his government unless and until he has paid the tax and met other requirements.

JAN 21 1941

Pay your poll tax before you forget about it. Register later. Have a voice in your government. It is the patriotic thing to do. It is the sensible thing to do. It is in the best interest of the individual to enjoy the privilege of the ballot.

Only in 8 states, all in the South, is the payment of the poll tax made a requirement for voting, and there lies the core of viciousness that is capable of producing another Wat Tyler among the submerged classes of our region.

—Barry Bingham, Publisher Louisville Courier-Journal.

JAN 31 1941

Southern News
almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

## Appeal To Congress

FEB 6 19

**Support of the Geyer Federal Anti-Poll Tax Bill, now before a committee in Congress, is the surest and quickest way to obtain the vote for ten million voteless people (six million white and four million black) in the eight poll-tax states of the South. This fact is made very clear in the following editorial re-printed from The Nashville Tennessean:**

"The demonstrated determination of the Crump-Cooper machine to maintain majority disfranchisement in Tennessee for as long as possible rekindles the interest of lovers of democracy in proposed Federal legislation against the poll tax.

"The Geyer Bill, which bans the poll tax as a requisite for voting in federal elections, has been re-introduced in the present Congress. It is a hope not only for Tennesseans, but for the millions of people throughout the poll-taxed South who are barred from the suffrage.

"Passage of this bill would make possible participation of the people of Tennessee in the election of presidents, senators and congressmen. It would effect, at least in part, the political emancipation our people seek and, as Americans, have the right to enjoy.

**"Actually the high-handed manipulation of the Tennessee Legislature to defeat the popular will in this important matter has greatly added to the strength of the case for federal anti-poll tax legislation. From the first, proponents of the Geyer bill have pointed to the apparent helplessness of the people of the poll tax states to shake off the poll tax yoke as a compelling reason for congressional action. It has not been difficult to see how tremendously the poll tax handicaps the democratic process where it stands in the way of any real popular referendum on the poll tax issue itself.**

"Of the eight poll tax states, only Tennessee has the tax only by legislative act and could be rid of it by simple legislative repeal. And if in Tennessee the Legislature could be so controlled by special interests, so disloyal to the people and the public welfare, as to deny liberation of the suffrage, where, but to Congress (specifically enjoined by the Constitution to enact necessary legislation to guarantee republican government in **all of the states**), should the people turn for relief?

"Since the legislative betrayal of last week, the people of Tennessee can look for abolition of the poll tax sooner than two years if 1) the Tennessee senate unanimously should reconsider its vote against repeal, or 2) Governor Cooper should call a special session to repeal, or 3) the Congress should enact the Geyer bill. Obviously the people have nothing to hope from the Governor or the senate. Accordingly, at this time, they must look to Congress—and it is exceedingly fortunate for the voteless people of the poll tax states that they have this alternative and this hope.

"We trust the Congress will honor its responsibility. For months, now, in continuous session it has bent its deliberations and actions to the defense of democracy on these shores and to assistance of the democratic cause across the oceans. It cannot, with honor or consistency, ignore the desperate plight of the democratic cause in the eight poll tax states, Tennessee being one, where the great majority of the people has no voice in its own government, either federal or local, nor faith in the pledges of parties or men.

FEB 6 1941

**"The Congress has taken the drastic action of drafting the citizens of the nation for training for the defense of democracy. Certainly it is a thing of fundamental concern of the Congress that democracy has steadily disappeared in these poll tax states—where indeed only a handful of the men registered for the draft have a voice in the government for whose defense they are compelled to stake their lives.**

"Congress could give no more convincing proof of the sincerity of its democratic purposes, could strike no finer blow for the defense of democracy, than by enacting legislation to revive popular rule in these politically benighted areas of our own land."

## Where The Danger Lies

Colonel Frank Knox, millionaire newspaper owner, appointed Secretary of the Navy last Fall by President Roosevelt, told a House of Representatives' committee in Washington last week that the United States is in great danger of invasion if Hitler wins.

All of the big dailies (like that owned by Colonel Knox) spread this story to frighten people into accepting the war dictatorship lend-lease bill.

Two things are wrong with Colonel Knox's testimony:

(1) There is no possibility of Hitler winning in Europe, just as there is also no possibility of the British winning. It becomes clearer every day that war in Europe will be stopped by revolution on one side or the other, (maybe on both sides) just as the war in 1918 was stopped by revolution.

(2) For all his pretended fear, Colonel Knox knows

that no military authority ever expects Hitler to invade this country, whether Britain wins or not. Colonel Knox does not bring out in his testimony this truth: He, and his big business friends, favor and admire dictatorship. They want our government to grind the people into deeper poverty for the greater profit of the monopolists; they want labor ruled with an iron hand; they want taxes on the common people and none on the very rich; they want no government spending except for profit of the big bankers. This, Hitler does in Germany.

In order to get the people to accept dictatorship they claim to want to defend democracy and spread baseless scare stories.

Colonel Knox and his kind are our greatest danger of dictatorship.

Washington Tribune
Washington, D. C.

# Dr. Bunche Tells Political Science Group About Ills

JAN 18 1941

## Howard U. Professor Addresses Association On Status of Negro

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, head of the Political Science Department at Howard University, told a scholarly white group in Chicago last week that the severe policies of registration officials in the deep south is the main cause of the mass disfranchisement of the Southern Negro.

Speaking at a session entitled "The Negro in American Politics" before members of the American Political Science Association at its thirty-sixth annual convention, Dr. Bunche outlined sixteen devices currently employed by Southern registration officials to prohibit or discourage Negroes from registering and voting.

It was the first time in the history of the organization that a session had been devoted to a study of the political status of the Negro. Besides Dr. Bunche, another Negro, George Snowden, a graduate of Shaw University, presented a paper on "Recent Trends in the Political Behavior of Negroes in New York City."

### Low Voting Ratio

"Perhaps the most striking feature of the Southern political picture is the low voting ratio, due almost as much to the disfranchisement of large numbers of poor whites as to the political disqualification of the Negroes," said Dr. Bunche.

"The franchise problems of black and white citizens in the South today are inter-related. Negro non-voting is more than a mere by-product of racial disunity. Non-voting of both black and white citizens is essentially a broad derivative of the political and economic structure of the South."

According to Dr. Bunche, who has written several volumes based upon a study of the Southern Negro, there is no uniformity of practice as between States as to devices employed in order to prohibit or discourage Negroes from registering and voting.

In some States registration is extremely difficult and quite out of the question as a result of the severe policies of registration officials and the hostility of the community.

### Devices Listed

Among the most important devices in current usage outlined by Dr. Bunche are the following:

1. Exclusion from the Democratic primary. This is in actuality a "white" rather than a "democratic" primary, for all whites, whether Democratic or Republican, are frequently admited to it, while all Negroes are barred.

2. Requiring one or more white character witnesses. Often the Negro applicant must have these appear in person.

3. Strict enforcement of the literacy tests against Negro applicants. I. e., requiring "reasonable" interpretation of the Constitution, and always to the satisfaction of the officials.

4. Putting unreasonable questions to Negro applicants in constitutional understanding or interpretation tests.

5. Severe application of property qualifications and requiring only Negro applicants to show property tax receipts.

6. Basing rejection of Negro registrants on alleged minor mistakes in filling out registration blanks.

7. Evasion by informing Negro applicants that registration cards have "run-out" etc.

8. Requiring Negro applicants to suffer long waits before the officials attend them.

9. Requiring Negro applicants to fill out their own blanks though those of white applicants are filled out for them by officials.

10. Deliberate insults, humiliations or threats by officials and hangers-on.

11. Discarding only Negro applications for conviction of misdemeanors.

12. Requiring enrollment in Democratic clubs from which Negroes are barred, for primary voting, as in South Carolina.

13. Severe application of the cumulative pool tax to Negro though not to white voters.

14. Loss of jobs or threat of loss of jobs by those Negroes who get "uppity" and insist on their right to register.

15. Warning prospective Negro voters in small towns that they will be "marked men" in the white community.

16. Intimidation through physical violence.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Confidential Report Given Atty-General

FEB 4 1941

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(ANP)—Back from a trip to the deep South where he went as an observer for the department of justice, Amos W. Woodcock, formerly prohibition administrator, under President Hoover, handed in a confidential report to the attorney general which it is believed, will lead to a thorough investigation of the charges against the white residents of Brownsville, Tenn.

Mr. Woodstock was firm in his belief that if the government through its department of justice sent qualified investigators to Brownville a case could be built which would stand in the federal courts and justice brought to the citizens who sought their legal rights at the polls and tried to vote.

Observing the legal aspects of the case, Mr. Woodcock visited Brownville, not in the capacity of an investigator, but as a lawyer, and discussed with white and colored residents of the town the terrors that prevailed in the little village when these Negroes went to vote.

FEB 4 1941

"It seems," said Mr. Woodcock, "that the trouble started when the colored folk protested the election of a school superintendent. They went to the wrong place to make their protests and the poorer element of the town became suspicious that these Negroes wanted to vote.

"Prior to this, it seems to me," said Mr. Woodstock, "that the relations between the two races had been as good as they are in any southern town. But if the government sends trained investigators into this village, they will find sufficient evidence to tie up the loose ends and bring a good case of conspiracy against the perpetrators of the crimes. Of course, the government cannot try anyone for murder but it can be proved that murder was incidental in the case."

Mr. Woodcock was winding up his affairs in the department of justice and had already submitted his support to his superiors, firmly convinced that federal action could be taken in this Brownsville situation, because a federal law had been violated. Whether this was contained in his report, he could not state as the report was confidential, but the general trend of his conversation would lead to the belief that such a recommendation had been made, based on his observances of the happenings and their sequence.

Negro Labor News
Houston, Texas

# WILL ATTEMPT TO FORCE HEARING ON ANTI-POLL TAX BILL

FEB 22 1941

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(ANP)—Under the parlimentary rules governing the house of representatives, unless some delay in the adjournment dates occur, Congressman Lee Geyer of California, plans to petition the house that his bill, known as H. R. Bill 1024, the anti-poll tax measure, be brought out from committee, the same as the anti-lynch bill was done last year, for an open discussion and vote.

FEB 22 1941

The tentative date set for this is February 24, and if there is no hitch in the plans, there will be plenty of fireworks as the congressman is strongly counting on the methods of the NAACP to bring this much

...lowership includes the great...

That the Chamber should ...eeded for the coming year w...y the huge attendance at the ...ry 7, at Emancipation Park. ...00 people were forced to be ... This year the Chamber has o...ember of the board of direct...hese directors have worked h...e Chamber to successful prom...eir friends are not going to l...

Pathfinder
Washington, D. C.

*How many people in the United States are of voting age?*

The Census Bureau estimates that there are 80,528,000 American citizens eligible to vote. The total number of persons 21 years of age or over, however, is 84,178,000, but 3,200,000 are aliens and 450,000 maintain their residence in the voteless District of Columbia. Go...don the voting eligibility figure, but who are non-voters because of illness and because they have forfeited their voting privilege are the 563,321 occupants of our mental institutions, and the 161,000 members of America's prison population.

AUG 2 1941

Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

# JOHN L. LEWIS AND WM. GREEN OPPOSE POLL TAX

## Labor Leaders to Help Push Enactment of Geyer Bill By Congress

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 9.—The National Negro Congress called upon individuals and organizations including the powerful Trade Unions to push the fight on a Nation Wide front to free ten million disfranchised Negro and white citizens who still live under the yoke of the poll tax in eight southern states.

JUL 18 1941

Because ... than sixty of the 218 signatures required to bring the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill to the floor of the House have been placed on the No. 1 petition on the Speaker's desk, a real campaign to get Congressmen to sign must be launched, Congress officials said.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# *End Poll Tax, Then Talk 'Americanism,' Dies Told*

## Westchester Negro Congress Plans Big Rally to Counter Scheduled 'Patriotic' Meeting to Hear Witchhunter

JAN 8 1941

(Special to the Daily Worker)

WHITE PLAINS, Jan. 7.—Fifty persons prominent in civic life here have addressed an open letter to Congressman Martin Dies protesting his scheduled appearance on Sun., Jan. 12 in the Westchester County Center. **"Go back to Texas, Mr. Dies," says the letter, "and end jim-crowism, lynching and the poll tax before you attempt to tell us that you are truly fighting for Americanism."**

Dies' appearance here is being sponsored jointly by the local organization of Elks and the American Legion as a "patriotic rally."

The open letter was initiated by the local chapter of the National Negro Congress.

**"We, as Americans," the letter declares, love our country and especially its great democratic traditions of equality for the entire people. We revere the principles for which the founders of this great nation shed their blood, namely Crispus Attucks, John Brown, Abraham Lincoln, as well as thousands of nameless heroes.**

**"We ask you Mr. Dies, when you speak of Amreicanism, will you tell us of the hundreds of victims of the lynch mobs in Texas? Will you tell us of the ten millions of citizens in Texas and other states of the South who are unable to vote because of the Poll tax?**

"Tell us, Mr. Dies, about the fifth column that keeps thousands of Negro and white sharecroppers in virtual peonage in Georgia, that in the name of 'national unity' jim-crows fifteen million Americans in the armed forces, that permits you to be elected to Congress by a vote of four per cent of the voting population of your district."

In addition to the open letter, the Negro Congress plans to conduct a mass rally as "An Answer to Dies."

Signers of the protest include the following:

JAN 8 1941

Rev. P. K. Fonvielle, pastor of Centennial A.M.E Zion Church, Mt. Vernon; Rev. O. Wacter, pastor of Barry Ave. Methodist Church, Mamaroneck; Rev. L. W. Hughes, pastor of Baptist Church, Greenburgh, member of Board of Education of Town of Greenburgh (only Negro member upstate); Benjamin Murrell, president, Mamaroneck Chapter of NAACP; Savila Tillman, president, Coeducational Club, White Plains; John Stroud, president, Comets A.C., Manhattan Park; Leucio Feleppa, vice-president, International Bricklayers, Plasterers and Masons Union, Local 83, Mt. Vernon.

Also Wilbur Wheeldin, executive board member, Hotel, Restaurant and Foodworkers Union, Local 178, New Rochelle; Edna Barnett, United Office and Professional Workers Union; Grant Walker, Westchester Youth Council; Elizabeth Moos, educator, Croton-on-Hudson; William Crawford, State Council, National Negro Congress, New Rochelle; John Yizar, Frederick Douglass Youth Club; Leon Chapman, National Negro Congress, Yonkers; Mrs. Wilhelmina Archer, West Side Mothers Club, New Rochelle; Milton Barnett, American Federation of Teachers, Local 191; Howard Willis, president, Frederick Douglass Youth Club; and Professor Horace Grenell, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville

Southern News Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# POLL TAX UNDER FIRE IN 2 STATES

FEB 20 1941

**Strong fights against the poll tax were underway in two Socthern states this week.**

**Arkansas poll tax repeal forces have been able to push a resolution through both houses of the legislature which will give the people an opportunity to vote in the next election on a constitutional amendment to abolish the poll tax. Labor and other organizations were united in this fight.**

FEB 20 1941

**In Georgia two bills have been introduced in the General Assembly to eliminate the poll tax through legislative action. Labor and other strong forces are pushing the bill, but they realize the strength of the old-line politicians in opposing the bills.**

## Amendment To Be Voted On In Arkansas

FEB 20 1941

LITTLE ROCK.—The most important development for several years in the fight to abolish the poll tax in eight Southern states occurred here this week when both houses of the Arkansas legislature voted to submit to the people of the state a constitutional amendment which separates the privilege of voting from the payment of poll tax.

The amendment will be on the ballot in the next general election in which members of the legislature are elected.

### MAJORITY VOTE

The poll tax is a part of the Arkansas constitution and a constitutional amendment is the proper way to get rid of it. An outstanding feature of the resolution is that the amendment shall become a part of the constitution "if a majority of the electors voting thereon . . . adopt such amendment."

Amendments to the Arkansas constitution submitted to the people in the past have sometimes been declared void unless the favorable vote was more than a majority of the highest number of votes cast for any official in the election.

The amendment also calls for a system of registration of all voters, the tax assessor in each county to be ex-officio registrar.

### PEOPLE CHEERED

Progressive forces in the South were greatly cheered by the news from Arkansas in view of the fact that the will of the people to be rid of the poll tax as a qualification for voting had recently been ignored in the legislatures of Tennessee.

**The highly significant victory in the state of Arkansas is credited to the militant and able leadership of the Arkansas anti-poll tax councils of which W. F. Hutchens of Hope is chairman. Mr. Hutchens is also chairman of the CIO council in his city.**

The Arkansas anti-poll tax councils have centered nearly all of their forces upon securing submission of an amendment to the state voters, although they have taken part in the national campaign to enact the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill by the United States Congress.

### SCHOOLS PROTECTED

The councils were able to get an amendment submitted in 1939, which the forces of reaction were able to defeat in the general election by confusing the public of the old argument that the poll tax goes for the schools. The present amendment provides that the legislature may enact a per capita tax for the benefit of public schools, but failure to pay the tax shall in no way limit a citizen's right to vote. This feature of the bill will enable anti-poll tax forces to make this issue more clear cut.

**Mr. Hutchens writes that the fight to secure adoption of the amendment is on and the anti-poll tax councils will wage a campaign of education from now until the time of the general election.**

FEB 20 1941

Howard Lee, executive secretary of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, with offices in Birmingham, said that his organization would give every assistance to anti-poll tax forces in Arkansas. The Southern Conference has been the spearhead of the drive against the undemocratic poll tax throughout the South for the past several years.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# SOUTHERN POLL-TAXERS RAISE WAR CRY IN SENATE

FEB 20 1941

## Senator Bailey Admits Bill Passage Would Be 'An Act of War'

## 'READY TO GO'

FEB 20 1941

## Bill Could Not Pass If Vote of Poll-Taxers Were Eliminated

(Daily Worker Washington Bureau)

**WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 19.—Southern poll-tax Senators today swelled the flood of war oratory on behalf of the President's lend-lease bill in speeches on the Senate floor.**

**Major Administration speeches during the day were made by Senators Tom Connollay of Texas and Lester Hill of Alabama. Both are poll-tax statesmen.**

Another important pro-war orator was Senator Josiah W. Bailey, die-hard Southern bourbon from North Carolina, a state which also has restrictive suffrage laws hitting primarily at Negroes.

Bailey advocated United States intervention in the European war and told the Senate that if passage of Roosevelt's British "aid" bill means war, "I am ready to go."

He said during the third day of debate on the measure that the bill "is not neutrality" but "is intervention." He conceded that the Axis powers may regard the legislation "as an act of war, but they do not attack because of provocation."

FEB 20 1941

Bailey's speech was in line with the open pro-war statements made by Carter Glass and other Southern reactionaries.

This entire trend was indicative of the fact that Southern poll-tax Congressmen have played a leading role in the fight for the lend-lease bill and for American participation in the war.

Moreover, it is indicative that the strongest support for the war measure has come from men in Congress who represent only a small handful of people.

### WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

An analysis of the vote on the lend-lease bill in the House of Representatives definitely shows that if the votes of Congressmen from eight poll-tax states and Louisiana North Carolina and Florida where restrictions on suffrage also exist, were eliminated the measure would not have passed in the House.

Out of a total of 99 votes cast by the Representatives of these eleven states, only three votes were against the war powers bill. Since HR 1776 passed the House of Representatives by a margin of 95 votes, the Tory Southern Congressmen really were responsible for putting the bill across.

FEB 20 1941

The same situation will probably arise in the Senate, where 22 votes will be cast by Senators from States which do not allow a majority of their citizens to vote.

A survey of the vote in the House reveals that Congressmen who joined with the majority of the American people in opposing the lend-lease bill were more representative of the voting population in their district than those who went along with the administration war program.

The average vote received in the 1940 election by Congressmen who voted against the bill was 72,808 as compared with a vote of 63,704 for representatives who were in favor of passage of the war measure.

Statistics show that the average per cent of the total population which voted in the 1940 Congressional elections was 35.64 per cent. It is most significant that the representatives of 30 states in which the average voting percentage exceeded 35.64 per cent cast more votes against the lend-lease bill than in favor of it.

In these 30 states, out of a total of 265 votes cast, a clear majority of 143 were against the measure and 122 for it.

FEB 20 1941

However in 18 states in which the average per cent of the total population which voted was less than 35.46 per cent, 139 votes were cast for the President's war bill, and only 22 votes against it.

Congressmen from the state of Indiana, which had the highest percentage of population voting in the Congressional elections, cast nine out of a total of twelve votes against the lend-lease bill.

In contrast, all six representatives from the state of South Carolina which had the lowest percentage of 1940 population voting, voted in favor of the legislation.

Southern News Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

## Georgia Is Fighting For Repeal Law

FEB 20 1941

ATLANTA, Ga.—Strong support is being rallied throughout Georgia to back two bills which have been introduced in the General Assembly to abolish the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting in Georgia.

Both the CIO and A. F. of L. are backing the two bills, and the League of Women Voters is working for their passage.

It takes both bills together to enfranchise the thousands who cannot vote under the poll tax system. One would repeal the poll tax from now on and the other would cancel back poll tax payments.

### HOUSE AND SENATE

The bill to abolish the poll tax has been introduced in the House and the Senate at the same time. Representative Mims, of Miller County, introduced it in the House as Bill Number 44. It is backed also by Representative Drake of Seminole County. In the Senate an identical bill has been introduced by Senator Jesse Drake of the 8th Senatorial District (Seminole, Mitchell, Decatur and Miller Counties).

FEB 20 1941

Although this bill would abolish the poll tax, it would not cancel back poll taxes still due. (Georgia has a cumulative poll tax). To remedy this, House Bill Number 114 has been introduced by Representative Kendrick of Fulton County. This bill cancels all back poll taxes.

Representative Kendricks is publisher of the A. F. of L. Journal of Labor.

### SECRET BALLOT

Two other bills are under consideration in the General Assembly which relate to free ballot. These bills, although already weakened by amendments, are aimed at insuring a secret ballot. Under the present system ballots are numbered and voters know that it is possible for their vote to be checked by politicians in control.

Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

## Attitudes

JUL 4 1941

The Negroes' political attitude in the South, is shaped by the conditions and environments with which he is surrounded. He does not think of politics in terms of freedom of thought and action, but in terms of meat and bread, and safety of body from harm. The challenge before him, whether to strike for liberty, or cou[illegible]tolerance, [illegible] has accepted the policy of least resistance to those, who have denied him the blessings of Life, Liberty and the pursuits of Happiness.

In principle, the Negro believes in the principles of the Republican Party, but gradually, in practice and to make himself more tolerant to those, who deny him the blessings of human liberty; he has substituted commercialism for human liberty. He has no hope of gaining freedom by his face about, because he knows that freedom does not come to slaves from their master, but despairing of the hope of ever being a free man; he accepts bread for freedom; and his attitude, is acquiesence in whatever befalls him, as a result of the fear and fright the white politician has encircled him. In Georgia, the Negro has been and is, indifferent to political trends refusing to qualify and take part in the welfare of his state because of laws enacted to disfranchise him, and the belligerent attitude of the white politician and press to suppress and intimidate him.

The Negro has more political freedom in Atlanta, than anywhere else in the state, but this freedom grows out of the fact, that the city has been so gerrimandered to make him absolutely powerless to use the ballot to help himself. We had twelve political wards, or divisions in the city, three in which the Negroes exceeded the whites; but the wards have been so gerrimandered in an unfair and unnatural way to put the Negro voter in a helpless position in every ward in the city, and there is no remedy for the evil. There is nothing in politics to encourage the Negro to be a good citizen, but everything to make him a bad citizen and disloyal to his country.

JUL 4 1941

52e-1941

GENERAL

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# Dixie Group Chides Dr. Gallup's Survey Of Poll Tax Opinion

APR 19 1941

Even if we did not have this evidence, Dr. Gallup, it could readily be ascertained that the great majority of citizens in every Southern state wish to vote and would do so if it were not for the poll tax requirement. We could go back to the period between 1880 and the 1900's when the poll tax system was imposed on the Southern people to combat the popularity of the Populist Party among the poor whites and Negroes and prove beyond any question the active desire of our people to have a voice in their government.

**Again quoting Mr. Evans: "In 1888, the last presidential election in which the Tennesseeans were free to vote their will," he said, "90 per cent of the adult population expressed a choice at the polls." But by 1940, Mr. Evans continued, "less than one-third of the potential voters—less than three out of ten—cast a ballot."**

Lack of space does not allow us to discuss in great detail the many other questions raised by the results of your survey. However, we would like to inquire just where and how your field reporters got their figures?

**To our knowledge practically all of the organizations of the people living in the eight poll tax states have declared themselves for poll tax repeal. Farm organizations are opposed to the poll tax. Organized labor and the Negro population are known for their strong anti-poll tax sentiments. Practically all women's societies and clubs likewise have gone on record for freeing the ballot.**

APR 19 1941

Just who are the people your reporters interviewed, Dr. Gallup? And how many people were included in your survey?

**In conclusion, I would like to call your attention to a report of another poll on this question which appeared in the Congressional Record of June 13, 1940. This poll, conducted by the Emergency Conference for Democratic Rights, and including samplings of opinion of all social, racial, regional and economic groups in some 35 states, found that 89 per cent of the American people are in favor of abolition of the poll tax. Out of 4,603,722 persons reached by the poll, 4,116,673 are reported as being in favor of the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill, and only 236,422 are reported as being opposed to this bill which would outlaw the poll tax in federal elections. These findings refute, it seems to me, the finding of your admittedly inadequate survey that only 63 per cent of the people throughout the United States are for abolishing the poll tax.**

News
Birmingham, Ala.

# States With Poll Tax Want To Keep It; Nation As Whole Opposes Levy

APR 3 1941

## Gallup Poll Shows Wide Divergence Of Opinion In Areas

### Majority In Southern Sections Using System Opposes Its Abolition

BY DR. GEORGE GALLUP
Director, American Institute of Public Opinion
Copyright, 1941

PRINCETON, N. J.—One of the political problems being widely discussed throughout the South is the question of abolishing poll taxes which are still a requirement for voting in eight Southern states.

Campaigns headed by civic and other groups have been started in nearly all of the eight states to repeal the poll taxes, and a bill has been introduced in Congress by Representative Geyer, of California, to bar the poll tax as a requirement for voting in federal elections.

With public discussion of the issue just beginning to take shape, the American Institute of Public Opinion has conducted a survey to measure public reaction to the anti-poll tax campaign, both in the poll tax states as a group and throughout the rest of the country. The study is the first of a series which will be conducted by the Institute in future months to measure the trends of sentiment on this issue.

Today's survey results reveal three facts about public opinion on the poll tax question.

1. Throughout the nation as a whole, a large majority of voters are in favor of abolishing all existing poll taxes.

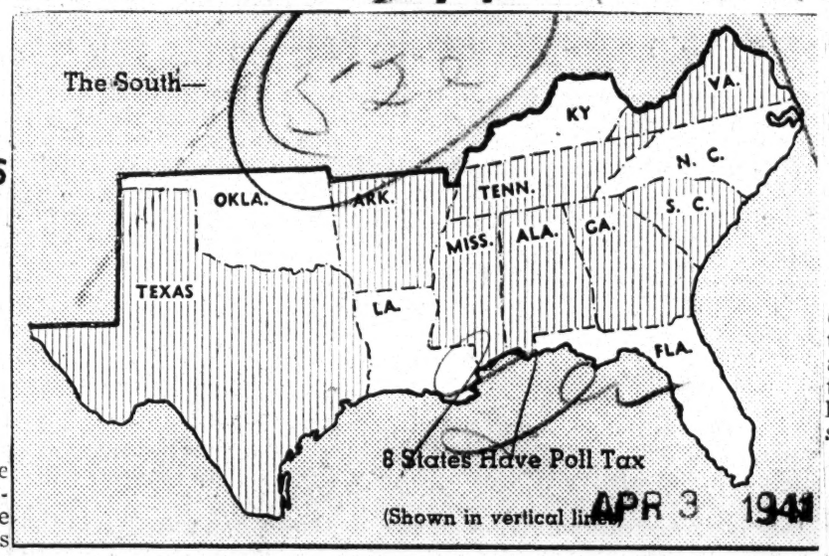
2. In the 13 Southern states public opinion is of mixed complexion on the issue. In the five Southern states which have already abolished poll taxes, or never had them, a majority wants to see them repealed in the other parts of the South where poll taxes are still in force.

**However, in the eight states which still have poll taxes—Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia—majority sentiment is still in favor of retaining the tax.**

APR 3 1941

In those eight states the issue was posed as follows:

"Should the poll tax be abolished as a requirement for voting in this state?"




APR 3 1941

The attitude of persons who have paid their poll taxes and are eligible to vote is as follows for the eight poll tax states combined:

**POLL TAX STATES**
**(Vote of Persons Who Have Paid Their Poll Tax)**

| | |
|---|---|
| For abolishing poll tax | 34% |
| For retaining poll tax | 49 |
| No opinion | 7 |

The survey also included, however, persons of voting age who, through failure to pay the poll tax, are not eligible to vote. When they are added to the others who have paid their taxes, the combined sentiment is:

**Poll Tax States**
**(Persons who have paid poll tax combined with those who have not).**

| | |
|---|---|
| For abolishing poll tax | 35% |
| For retaining poll tax | 53 |
| No opinion | 12 |

In interpreting these figures it must be remembered that the percentages apply to the eight poll tax states as a whole, and are not necessarily typical for each of the states individually. Special studies with larger samples are necessary to report sentiment by individual states.

APR 3 1941

**How Rest Of Nation Feels**

The next aspect of the question is —what is the sentiment of the rest of the South (the five non-poll tax states), and of the country as a whole?

Here are the findings of the survey on that score:

**"Some Southern states require every voter to pay a poll tax amounting to $1 a year or more before they can vote. Do you think these poll taxes should be abolished?"**

**Vote in five Southern states with no poll tax.**

| | |
|---|---|
| For abolishing poll tax | 51% |
| For retaining poll tax | 36 |
| No opinion | 13 |

**Total United States Vote**

| | |
|---|---|
| For abolishing poll tax | 63% |
| For retaining poll tax | 25 |
| No opinion | 12 |

Florida, Louisiana and North Carolina formerly levied poll taxes but abolished them in recent years.

The average tax in the eight states with poll tax requirements is about $1.75. In some states the taxes are cumulative so that a voter might be required to pay as much as $36 before he could vote.

In the early days of the Republic only people who owned property could vote. Poll taxes were adopted in those days as a means of widen-

APR 3 1941

# Arguments On The Poll Tax

*Here are some of the arguments on the poll tax which were stressed by persons interviewed in the South by field reporters for the Gallup Poll:*

**For Abolishing The Tax**

A 76-year-old farmer in Hazen, Ark., expressed his opinion to Institute Interviewer Bess Lay as follows:

"You cain't find a man in this whole county that voted for the poll tax in the first place—it was just put on and run over the people."

Over in De Valls Bluff, Ark., another farmer felt the poll tax system encouraged political corruption. He told an Institute interviewer:

**"It's gotten so rotten the way they purchase those poll taxes that the whole poll tax system ought to be done away with."**

From Knoxville, Interviewer Roger Johnson reports the following statement by a timekeeper in a textile mill:

"I don't think it's right to make some people pay a poll tax while others in other states don't have to."

A 37-year-old bookkeeper in the same city expressed his view this way: "Abolishing the tax would eliminate a lot of election frauds and produce more votes and a more democratic form of government."

**For Retaining The Tax**

In Kosciusko, Miss., an Institute reporter interviewed a 40-year-old farm wife who had this to say in casting her vote to retain the poll tax:

**"Poll taxes help pay for the schools and keep the Negroes from voting."**

A 30-year-old insurance agent in Virginia, expressing an attitude held by many voters in the survey, said:

APR 3 1941

"We ought to keep the poll tax because when you pay a tax you're more interested in the results of an election."

One poor white farmer in the Deep South was for retaining the poll tax because he thought there were many people who wouldn't take voting seriously enough to be able to vote intelligently. He said:

**"Better keep the poll tax because it we don't have it some people will just vote 'cause somebody gives 'em a bottle of whisky or a $1 bill."**

ing the suffrage. By paying a few dollars poll tax, persons could vote without having to own property.

Contrary to popular impression, the present poll tax system in the South is of comparatively recent origin, dating back only to the period between 1880 and the early 1900's. The taxes were levied chiefly as a means of combatting the popularity of the Populist party among poor whites in the South.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

# SIGNATURES OF 218 NEEDED TO BRING MEASURE TO FLOOR; WRITE TO YOUR CONGRESSMAN

## Congressman Hatton Sumners of Texas Is Letting Bill Important to Negroes Die in Committee

MAY 2 1941

WASHINGTON.—The Geyer-Pepper Anti-Poll Tax bill, designed to give millions of southern Negro people the right to vote, is bottled up in the House judiciary committee of which Hatton Sumners of Texas is chairman.

To bring the bill before the house for a vote, it will be necessary to obtain the signatures of 217 congressmen on a petition to discharge the house judiciary committee from consideration of the bill.

MAY 2 1941

Citizens of northern and border states are urged to write their congressmen urging them to sign the discharge petition and free the bill, so that the members of the house might vote upon it. It is believed that if the bill gets to the house floor, it will pass.

The bill is sponsored by Congressman Lee E. Geyer of California and Senator Claude Pepper of Florida.

Congressman Geyer believes the bill has a good chance of passing. "I am confident," he said this week, "that if the Negro voters bring all of their influence to bear that the anti-poll tax bill can be passed. The anti-lynching bill passed the house last year with the support of 262 congressmen. If the same congressmen will support the anti-poll tax bill, I am sure that it will be possible for the bill with the backing of Senator Pepper of Florida, to scale the hurdle in Florida.

MAY 2 1941

The poll tax is the obstacle which prevents millions of Negroes from voting in the South.

When citizens write their congressman, they should ask them to sign Discharge Petition No. 1 and to vote for House Resolution 1024.

The bill is backed by the N.A.A.C.P., the Urban League, the National Negro Congress, the Elks, the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Non-Partisan Lobby and other groups.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# Dixie Kept in Political Bondage by Poll Tax

Because of the poll tax in eight Southern States, by which the majority of the citizens are kept from voting, Southern Congressmen have chairmanships of 50 per cent of the important committees in both Houses, although they represent only 17 per cent of the States.

According to a recent report of the National Negro Congress, these same men, whose filibustering caused the defeat of the antilynch bill and other progressive legislation, stay in office longer than men from non-poll tax States.

MAY 24 1941

**The average length of service of Senators from poll tax States was said to be fifteen years, or twice that of those coming from States which do not have this tax.**

In the case of Representatives, the average tenure of office for those from the poll tax States was given as eight and a half years and for the others, six and a half years.

The yearly taxes which men must pay to vote follow:

| State | Tax |
|---|---|
| Alabama | $1.50 |
| Arkansas | 1.00 |
| Georgia | 1.00 |
| Mississippi | 2.00 |
| South Carolina | 1.00 |
| Tennessee | 2.00 |
| Texas | 1.75 |
| Virginia | 1.50 |

### Tax Bars Majority

MAY 24 1941

The effect of this tax is seen in the small percentage of the people from those States who voted in the 1940 general election. In South Carolina, only 9.8 per cent of those eligible voted, in Mississippi, only 15.2 per cent.

Other States and the per cent voting follow: Tennessee, 27.9; Texas, 28.7; Virginia, 20.8; Alabama, 17.6; Georgia, 16.3, and Arkansas, 17.8.

**According to the NNC report, Senator Cotton Ed Smith of Georgia, who filibustered the antilynch bill in 1937, was re-elected in 1938 by 5.5 of the voters of his State, and Martin Dies of Texas, who spends the taxpayers' money attacking the labor movement, was re-elected by 7.7 per cent of the adults in his district.**

MAY 24 1941

It was also pointed out that when the antilynch bill was in the House, 97 per cent of the poll tax men opposed it as compared with 16 per cent from the other States. In the Senate, the poll tax men were 100 per cent against it and the other States only 67 per cent.

There are now in Congress sixteen Senators and seventy-eight Representatives from the poll tax States who were neither put in office nor can be voted out by the majority at home.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# Poll Tax Evil Gets Nation-wide Airing

WASHINGTON.

In a nation-wide broadcast over the NBC Blue network, Sunday, Congressman Rudolph G. Tenerowicz (Dem., Mich.) termed the poll-tax laws of eight Southern States a "blight on democracy," which prevents "true representatives" of all the people from being sent to Congress.

The broadcast, sponsored by the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, culminated the observance of National Anti-Poll Tax Week, aimed at securing support for the Geyer-Pepper Bill to abolish the poll-tax provision as a requisite for voting in national elections.

MAY 24 1941

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

## WHY COTTON ED SQUAWKS

Cotton Ed Smith of South Carolina, sought, last week, to break up a Senate committee's investigation of the fitness of Walter Langer (Rep., N.D.) to sit in the Senate.

Langer, a former Governor, is accused of mishandling public funds and moral turpitude.

Cotton Ed took the position that the State of North Dakota knew all about Langer when it elected him to the Senate, and once a State has spoken, the U.S. Senate should let the matter rest.

The attitude of the South Carolina Senator is not surprising. He owes his own seat in the Senate to certain malpractices, notably the disfranchisement of colored voters by intimidation and violence. The result is that States with half the eligible voters South Carolina has require twice as many votes to elect a Senator.

Here's the way it works out:

| Citizens of Voting Age | | Senatorial Vote |
|---|---|---|
| South Carolina | 819,000 | 106,000 |
| Rhode Island | 421,000 | 220,000 |
| West Virginia | 900,000 | 541,000 |

Southern States, by strong-arm methods, keep millions of colored and white voters from the polls, and one day the United States Senate is going to investigate these undemocratic practices.

Nobody knows that better than Cotton Ed. He sees it coming a long way off, and to forestall it as long as possible, he now advocates leaving the question of electing Senators to the States.

Happily the Senate committee overruled the improperly-elected South Carolina sourpuss and the investigation goes on.



Among other things, colored Americans are interested that this non-discrimination clause be included in Judge Rosenman's forthcoming housing agency report.

The latest available roster of colored employees of the USHA and their annual salaries, is as follows:

Adviser, $5,600; two assistants, $3,600 and $2,600; assistant housing manager, $4,000; four housing managers at $4,000, $2,900, $2,600 and $2,300; associate management supervisor, $3,200; two resident housing managers at $3,200 and $2,300; architectural engineer, $3,200; associate architect, $3,200;

Two maintenance superintendents at $2,300; two principal management aides at $2,300; two building custodial engineers at $2,000; assistant management auditor, $2,000; senior management aide, $2,000; senior architect, $2,000; secretary and research assistant, $2,000;

**Two Get $1800 Annually**

Two tenant selection supervisors at $1800; maintenance superintendent, $1800; two bookkeepers at $1620; chauffeur, $1680; two assistant management aides at $1620; three bookkeeper clerks at $1440; bookkeeper cashier, $1440; three junior management aides at $1440;

Two management aides at $1440; two under management aides at $1260; junior mail, file and record clerk, $1440; junior clerk, $1440; two tenant selection aides at $1440; three tenant selection investigators at $1440; two cashier stengraphers at $1440;

**Eleven Get $1260.**

Junior cashier-accountant clerk, $1440; two junior clerk-stenographers at $1440; rental clerk, $1440; assistant clerk-stenographer, $1440; two junior stenographers at $1320; head messenger, $1320; junior management aide, $1260; two minor tenant selection investigators, $1260;

Cashier-stengrapher, $1260; rental clerk-stenographer, $1260; six senior messengers at $1260; under mail clerk, $1260; cashier-typist, $1260; two rental under clerks at $1260; junior rental clerk, $$1260; junior rental clerk-typist, $1260; messenger-chauffeur, $1260; two stenographers at $1200;

Clerk, $1080; nine under clerk-typists at $1080; rental clerk-stenographer, $1080; six messengers at $1080; seven watchmen at $1080; rental guide, $1080; minor rental guide, $1020; three junior rental guides at $840.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# 108 Employed in USHA Watching Reorganization

WASHINGTON.

The 108 colored employees of the United States Housing Authority are anxiously awaiting the report of Judge Samuel Rosenman who has been a commissioned by the President to make a survey of the various housing agencies looking forward to a reorganization.

This anxiety is based, not only on the probable ill effects it may have upon the highly efficient colored USHA personnel, but also upon its possible curtailment of employment opportunities for thousands of colored skilled and unskilled workers throughout the country.

The USHA permanent staff carries more than a hundred colored employees and one of the special duties of this group has been to arrange for the employment of thousands of workers on housing projects under construction, through the non-discrimination clause in project contracts which require that 10 per cent of all employees be colored.

**Want Requirement Continued**

Chicago Tribune
Chicago, Illinois

## WHY THE SOUTH VOTES FOR WAR.

Gen. Wood of the America First committee has already made the point that the congressmen who voted to kill the neutrality act represent only a minority of the population of the United States. He could have pursued his point a step further. The indorsement of Mr. Roosevelt's step toward war came from a group which represents an even smaller minority of the enfranchised voters of the country.

The neutrality repeal was made possible in the house by the overwhelming vote in its favor from the solid south. Those 12 states [including Oklahoma in the group] cast 88 votes for the repeal to 13 against it. Two more of their representatives were paired for the repealer and one against it.

Those representatives who favored repeal cannot presume to speak for the millions of Negroes in their states who will go into the labor battalions if we go to war. The Negroes are disfranchised thru the closed primary and other devices. Neither can they presume to speak in most instances for the white tenant farmers and sharecroppers whose sons will march in the infantry. Most of their states collect a poll tax which operates to disfranchise the poorer whites along with the Negroes.

The fact that the deep south has made a good thing of the war thru the location of most of the training camps there, to the vast detriment of the army's comfort and morale and the considerable impairment of its efficiency, is well known. Another field in which the armament program is operating to put money in the pockets of the southern war hawks' constituents came to attention the other day.

The latest issue of Army Ordnance contains a map showing the location of the army's ordnance plants and depots. Of 92 such facilities 22 have been established since last March 1. And of these 22 new plants and depots 14 have been set up in the seven states of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. More than two-thirds of the new plants and depots went into an area that has less than one-tenth the industrial population or productivity of the nation.

In citing these facts, which cannot help but have their logical effect on the minds of congressmen, we have no wish to raise a purely sectional issue. If we did wish to do so, our point would be destroyed by the action of the 14 men, 13 Democrats and one mountain Republican, who voted or were paired against the repealer. This list includes such able and thoughtful men as Doughton of North Carolina, Sumners of Texas, and Smith of Virginia. They refused to let either sectional interest or the false claims of party loyalty stand in the way of their duty as patriotic Americans. They are influential men in the south and their stand gives hope that that area is beginning to see, thru the screen of fictional Democracy, the actuality of the communistic dictatorship that is being prepared in Washington.

New York Age
New York, N. Y.

## JOHN L. LEWIS ON THE "POLL TAX" SOLONS

DEC 6 - 1941 DEC 6 1941

Accused of being a traitor for calling the strike in the captive mines of the bituminous coal industry, John L. Lewis lashed back at his accusers, mostly Congressmen from the South, in a speech before the CIO Convention in Dertoit recently. The pugnacious labor leader said in part:

"I laugh at such a charge and I challenge the Connallys and the Coxes and the Smiths, any one of them to absent themselves from the immunity of their specially protected position in Congress and walk up to John L. Lewis and call him a traitor.

"I prefer to believe that there is no more disloyalty in being a party, as they are, to the arrangement in eight Southern states that prevents ten and one-half million Americans from casting a vote as to who shalll represent them in the federal Congress; ten and a half million Americans disfranchised, and only three million of them are colored; the other seven and a half million are white. So, it isn't the Negro question that some of our Southern fire-eaters would like to present."

DEC 6 - 1941

While we disagree with many of Mr. Lewis' policies, we admire his courage in speaking out on a subject that to many white people is taboo. We prefer his brand of democracy to that of many other leaders who talk of equal opportunity but do nothing to better the conditions of the man lowest down. 46,000 members of the United Mine Workers Union are Negroes and Mr. Lewis makes no differential in pay or hours of work for the colored members in his union because of their race And they have some voice in the conduct of their unions which is more than can be said of many other similar organizations.

New Republic
New York, N.Y.

## Correspondence

JAN 15 1942

Dec. 15, 1941

### Fighting the Poll Tax

Dec. 15, 1941

JAN 15 1942

SIR: To suggest, as did T. R. B. in your issue of November 24, that unless the fight against the poll-tax requirement for voting is sidetracked Southern congressmen will retaliate by blocking the President's foreign policy is to underline the threat to democracy inherent in the requirement. Today it is found in only eight states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Its avowed purpose is the disfranchisement of a large proportion of the adult citizens of those states, and for this purpose it has proved most effective. Voters' lists were cut by one-third to one-half immediately after the introduction of the requirement, and today only about one-fourth of the adult citizens in the poll-tax states vote in presidential elections and about one-third in the primaries. In some counties as few as 14 percent of the adult citizens are qualified voters.

JAN 15 1942 Dec. 15, 1941

The tax requirement is not the simple one of the payment of $1 to $2 annually. Most states add interest and penalties for late payment or assessment of the tax, though no official notice of the due date is given. Four states require payment of the tax for more than the current year. In all of them the basic annual tax is the minimum requirement. In Arkansas and Georgia the tax is doubled for late assessment. In Georgia the voter can theoretically be charged $47.47, and often must actually pay $15 or more to vote. In Alabama he is quite often required to pay $36. These sums must be paid long before election day; in Georgia and Virginia, six months before, in Alabama, Mississippi and Texas, by February 1 of election year. Official efforts to collect the tax are forbidden in Alabama, Mississippi and Virginia. A properly dated poll-tax receipt becomes the voter's pass, and in some states these receipts are sold in blank by the tax collector and later issued by the machine to its faithful henchmen. Under this system the legislator has often been dependent on the good will, not of the majority of the citizens of his state, but of a few machine politicians whose power has been acquired in large part through manipulation of the poll-tax requirements.

JAN 15 1942

Dec. 15 1941

ELEANOR BONTECOU,
Director, Suffrage in the South

*Arlington, Va.*

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## *Democracy's Achilles Heel*

**The United States is conceded to be the world's leading democratic nation, but its weak spot that makes it extremely vulnerable, its Achilles heel, is the South.**

**This fact was brought clearly into focus in the recent Congressional vote on the extension of the time of service of draftees.**

**Except by the warmongers and interventionists, who comprise only a tiny minority of the American people, this extension of service was regarded as unfair to the draftees and another move on the part of the Administration to make the public more war-minded.**

**It is significant that this measure passed the House by only one vote (and that obtained by sharp practice of the Southern Speaker), and would not have passed at all except for the votes of poll-tax congressmen from sections where from one-third to one-half of the eligible voters are disfranchised with the approval of the U. S. Supreme Court.**

**Representatives of 15 Southern states voted 120 to 15 in favor of this measure, while for the remaining 33 states, the vote was only 83 for to 187 against draft extension.**

**On the surface this would seem to indicate that the South favored the draft extension, but of course these Southern congressmen do not represent the Southern people. They represent the Southern planters, mill owners, bankers and those who serve them.**

**A white observer recently returned from an extensive tour of the South, reports that after talking to thousands of people on buses, in homes, on street corners and in drug stores, he found not a single one in favor of American intervention in foreign war or extension of the time of service for draftees.**

**Southern congressmen can ignore the sentiment of the people because they are not representing them and have nothing to fear from them, unlike the representatives from the North, East and West.**

**In the first place, from one-third to one-half of their electorates are disfranchised by law and terror, and the concentration on the color caste system to the exclusion of everything else has discouraged open difference of opinion and debate on important issues.**

**Here is the weak spot in American democracy because, as experience has amply demonstrated, these Southern representatives and senators are ever the mainstays of reactionary, fascist, dictatorial policies of any and every Democratic Administration.**

**On every issue they run counter to the will of the majority of the American people, and when democracy dies in the United States, these undemocratic politicians will be its destroyers.**

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# CIO Petitions High Court On Poll Tax Illegality

### Southern Conference for Human Welfare Join in Fight on Tennessee Case; Lewis Aids Pirtle Plea; Cite Bases for Unconstitutionality

(Daily Worker Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 3.—The CIO and Southern Conference for Human Welfare today presented a joint petition to the United States Supreme Court declaring the poll tax in Tennessee illegal and unconstitutional and urging that a lower court ruling which upheld the tax be set aside.

Lee Pressman, General Counsel of the CIO, and Crampton Harris, of Birmingham, presented the petition on behalf of Henry Pirtle who has charged that the Tennessee poll tax is unconstitutional and refused to pay the tax.

John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare cooperated in preparing the Pirtle case for presentation to the Supreme Court.

LEE PRESSMAN

#### BASED ON 3 POINTS

The petition argued that the poll tax was illegal and unconstitutional on three main grounds:

1. "The right to vote for members of Congress is a right arising from and fundamentally based on Art. 1, Sec. 17 of the Constitution of the U. S.

2. "Rights and privileges arising out of the Constitution of the U. S. are not subject to state taxation in any form.

3. "The 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the U. S., in prohibiting any state from making or enforcing any law abridging the privileges and immunities of citizens of the U. S., renders invalid and unconstitutional the imposition by the state of Tennessee of a poll tax as a prerequisite to the right to vote for members of Congress."

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

# SOUTHERN NEGRO STILL IN DECLINE

### Population Percentage In Area Drops To 24 Per Cent Of Total

ALTANTA, Oct. 21 — (AP). — The Commission on Interracial Cooperation asserted Tuesday that "politicians who capitalize the fear of Negro domination in the South will get no support from the 1940 census" which shows a continued decline in Negro population percentage.

In a statement which named no individual politicians, the commission cited the census to show that the percentage of Negroes in the South has declined steadily from 36 per cent in 1880 to about 24 in 1940.

The same trend, it was noted, has been evident in nearly every Southern state. Whereas from 1840 to 1880 three states, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, had more Negroes than whites, this is no longer true of any state. Louisiana crossed the line in 1900, South Carolina in 1930, and Mississippi in 1940.

The following table shows the changes that have taken place, state by state, since 1880:

| | Per Cent Negro Population | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1880 | 1900 | 1940 |
| Alabama | 47.5 | 45.2 | 34.8 |
| Arkansas | 26.3 | 28 | 24.8 |
| Florida | 47 | 43.7 | 27 |
| Georgia | 47 | 46.7 | 34.7 |
| Kentucky | 19 | 13.3 | 7.5 |
| Louisiana | 50 | 47.1 | 36 |
| Mississippi | 57.5 | 58.5 | 49.5 |
| North Carolina | 37.9 | 33 | 28.2 |
| South Carolina | 60.7 | 58.3 | 43 |
| Tennessee | 26.2 | 23.8 | 17.3 |
| Texas | 24.7 | 20.4 | 14.5 |
| Virginia | 41.8 | 35.6 | 24.8 |

There has also been a notable breakup of local congestions of Negro population. In 1880 there were 300 "Black Belt" counties in which Negroes outnumbered whites, in 1930 only 189 such counties.

These changes, the statement says, are due to two causes: A much higher Negro death rate, and continued Negro migration to other parts of the country.

The five cities having the greatest Negro population all are north of the Mason-Dixon line—New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington.

The 1940 census reports for the whole county a Negro population of approximately 12,800,000, or 9.7 per cent of the total, about one in ten. In the first census, taken in 1790, Negroes comprised 19.3 per cent of the total, or approximately one in five.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinoi

# DUSTIN' — off the — NEWS

OCT 18 1941

LUCIUS C. HARPER

## LET REAL MEN REPRESENT RACE; NOT "BLACK CABINETS"

IN EVERY city and community where Negroes of considerable number are permitted to exercise their right to vote, and where the two major political parties depend more or less on that vote for victory at the polls, we have what is called the "Black Cabinet."

This group is usually made up of professional officeholders or politicians seeking some sort of profitable exemption from the law in case of their party triumph. From administration to administration they feed at the public trough. Sometimes they content themselves with distributing the scant Negro patronage to their favorites; and sometimes they are satisfied with running a crap game in defiance of the law and with plenty of inside protection.

In any event they are self-acknowledged representatives of the entire race. They are our self-appointed leaders. They are the entire group to the extent that when they talk of the Negro race they really mean themselves. Certainly they claim to own and control the entire colored vote. They bargain for it with the white political boss with all kinds of promises thrown in the bargain; from the right to operate vice unmolested to buying the "voices" of some unholy preachers in the campaign. There is no depth of infamy to which "Black Cabinets" will not stoop to deliver the Negro vote.

* * *

WHITE POLITICIANS seem incapable of learning the truth, or listening to the truth about these parasites, and so think the "Black Cabinet" expensive but indispensable. These hungry and hustling spokesmen are allowed to state their own case and to tell of their own selfish importance to the cause. There is nothing worthwhile in the past, present or future for which they do not take all credit.

OCT 1 1941

Thus, every community of Negroes is cursed by its "Black Cabinet" of utterly selfish and usually unworthy men. These men pretend to speak for the Race. In reality they are speaking for themselves. There is nothing back of them except their dishonesty and unadulterated nerve. Yet they are looked upon as our leaders. They make the contacts with the white men who are ambitious and do things, and who do not take time to seek out and secure the best representation in the Negro race. These white men assume that because a man is colored, he therefore, represents the colored race. A substantial, high-grade group of Negro leaders is not wanted, nor do whites care to pay the price in high-class political exchange for real Negro leadership.

The "Black Cabinet" is not simply a local millstone around the neck of the Race. The national field particularly is inviting. In the state and in the nation-at-large there is great opportunity for selfish aggrandizement. Our "National Black Cabinet" differs little from the local machine except in the scope of action and the size of the job or favor involved. The spirit, the methods, the aims, are about the same.

* * *

HERE WE have a group of Negro politicians, often officeholders, who claim to represent the Negro race, who hold their race as a pawn for so many jobs or preferments. They enjoy the honor of being called upon to pass on the merit of a reputable Negro, and further pride themselves in "knocking" him out of a responsible position if he doesn't happen to be in the "clique." They seek the ear of national white leaders, virtually get down on their knees to them, deceive them into believing that the Negro vote is controlled nationwide by a half dozen or more Negro political hustlers.

It is a known fact these would-be bosses in the "Black Cabinet" control nothing. Most of them have no vote, and dwell in districts now that do not grant them the ballot. They would hold office and control patronage in Washington because of the Negro vote in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. There is hardly a bureau in the nation's capital having a "Negro Assistant" in it that actually functions in unreservedly demanding anything worth while for the Negroes of the country. These "Black Cabinet" members who usually occupy "posts of importance" are nothing more than professional letter-writers whose duty it is to satisfy Negro complaints by mail, and keep protesting delegations, or discourage them, from storming the various governmental departments and the White House with just grievances. Many of them want Roosevelt to run for a fourth term in order that they may retain their positions at fat salaries and disport themselves throughout the country as real leaders of black folk.

It is important that the Negro have leaders. These should be men of sterling worth, of achievement, of intellect, thoroughly imbued with the ideals of democracy and full-orbed manhood, and with a passion of unselfish service to their country and people. The Negro race cannot afford to swap its inalienable rights for the privilege of securing fat-salaried positions for a small group of men.

* * *

FOR HONEST, constructive and uncompromising leadership, the Negro must contend. Like every other great people, he must know that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. He must realize that men who regard soft political positions carrying profitable salaries, and who will compromise on racial issues for fear of losing these salaries, are not trustworthy as leaders. In this period of national strife, it is high time to dissolve all "Black Cabinets," destroy all bought-and-paid-for leadership, and let real men come to the front to represent the Race. We have them in every city, even in the nation's capital.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

## Voting

OCT 22 1941

Voting is the principal part of the contract entered into for the consideration of a democracy with, by and for the consent of the governed. In fact voting is the base upon which the whole structure of free government is founded. It can be refused only and when there is a sinister desire on the part of strictly the enemies of free government to seize upon under hand methods to establish the wishes of the minority or to cut certain elements not to their liking from the privilege of threatening those in power. That is to say when this minority or privileged element succeeds in putting over a candidate of measure, he is not bound in any way for any consideration of those refused the ballot.

Any participation in any measure of subterfuge, which is used to give the color of legality to their scheme, is by no means foreign to friends seeking to overthrow our government of constituted authority.

If the Congress of the United States specified that men with a certain color of hair or eyes only would be allowed to vote on measures coming before that body, it would be hard for the people of the United States to scrutinize the opinions of the congress. If only men of brown eyes are allowed to vote, measures passed by the Congress would represent the wishes of the brown eyed men.

In any system in which primaries are held on any other than political faith, they carry with them no establishment of principle or purpose. There can be no claim of representative party opinion where the color scheme is used as a method of identifying membership and participation.

Be it remembered at all times, there is at work a dissatisfaction which in time may undermine the whole of our claim of a representative process, when men are not allowed to participate in a primary of their faith. Credit reporting agencies and banking houses pay no attention to the color scheme when they look up the rating of an individual. If they did, there would not be a single firm out of the neighborhood of bankruptcy.

OCT 22 1941

If we are to survive at all as a republic—a free people of representative government—then we must insist at all times upon a government with the consent of the governed.

In the last few elections there has been a general trend on the part of colored groups toward the Democratic Party. In many of the doubtful states the balance was possibly turned in favor of F. D. Roosevelt in the last two election by the very people denied to vote their preference in primaries in the Southern States. There are many people in the Southland of the colored group who hav a Democratic political faith. In the proffer of this faith they are met with the chagrin that the Republican Party has never in all its history held a white primary. Nowhere in any state has the Republican Party sought to disfranchise anybody. This liberal record of actual practice is hard for even the northern Negroes to jump over in their contention that their brothers should join up with the Democratic Party.

In every section except the South county and state government are looking out for voters. It does not care what the color of their hair, eyes or skin is. They want numbers and are going out in a big way for them.

OCT 22 1941

Voters in the South are like its vast waterpower, mineral resource and industrial possibilities are going to waste. Instead of going out after numbers, there is every scheme and subterfuge to keep men from voting and exercising their preference in who shall levy their taxes, conduct their school boards and represent them in congress.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinoi

# DUSTIN' — off the — NEWS

OCT 18 1941

LUCIUS C. HARPER

## LET REAL MEN REPRESENT RACE; NOT "BLACK CABINETS"

IN EVERY city and community where Negroes of considerable number are permitted to exercise their right to vote, and where the two major political parties depend more or less on that vote for victory at the polls, we have what is called the "Black Cabinet."

This group is usually made up of professional officeholders or politicians seeking some sort of profitable exemption from the law in case of their party triumph. From administration to administration they feed at the public trough. Sometimes they content themselves with distributing the scant Negro patronage to their favorites; and sometimes they are satisfied with running a crap game in defiance of the law and with plenty of inside protection.

In any event they are self-acknowledged representatives of the entire race. They are our self-appointed leaders. They are the entire group to the extent that when they talk of the Negro race they really mean themselves. Certainly they claim to own and control the entire colored vote. They bargain for it with the white political boss with all kinds of promises thrown in the bargain; from the right to operate vice unmolested to buying the "voices" of some unholy preachers in the campaign. There is no depth of infamy to which "Black Cabinets" will not stoop to deliver the Negro vote.

* * *

WHITE POLITICIANS seem incapable of learning the truth, or listening to the truth about these parasites, and so think the "Black Cabinet" expensive but indispensable. These hungry and hustling spokesmen are allowed to state their own case and to tell of their own selfish importance to the cause. There is nothing worthwhile in the past, present or future for which they do not take the credit.

OCT 1 1941

Thus, every community of Negroes is cursed by its "Black Cabinet" of utterly selfish and usually unworthy men. These men pretend to speak for the Race. In reality they are speaking for themselves. There is nothing back of them except their dishonesty and unadulterated nerve. Yet they are looked upon as our leaders. They make the contacts with the white men who are ambitious and do things, and who do not take time to seek out and secure the best representation in the Negro race. These white men assume that because a man is colored, he therefore, represents the colored race. A substantial, high-grade group of Negro leaders is not wanted, nor do whites care to pay the price in high-class political exchange for real Negro leadership.

The "Black Cabinet" is not simply a local millstone around the neck of the Race. The national field particularly is inviting. In the state and in the nation-at-large there is great opportunity for selfish aggrandizement. Our "National Black Cabinet" differs little from the local machine except in the scope of action and the size of the job or favor involved. The spirit, the methods, the aims, are about the same.

* * *

HERE WE have a group of Negro politicians, often officeholders, who claim to represent the Negro race, who hold their race as a pawn for so many jobs or preferments. They enjoy the honor of being called upon to pass on the merit of a reputable Negro, and further pride themselves in "knocking" him out of a responsible position if he doesn't happen to be in the "clique." They seek the ear of national white leaders, virtually get down on their knees to them, deceive them into believing that the Negro vote is controlled nationwide by a half dozen or more Negro political hustlers.

It is a known fact these would-be bosses in the "Black Cabinet" control nothing. Most of them have no vote, and dwell in districts now that do not grant them the ballot. They would hold office and control patronage in Washington because of the Negro vote in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. There is hardly a bureau in the nation's capital having a "Negro Assistant" in it that actually functions in unreservedly demanding anything worth while for the Negroes of the country. These "Black Cabinet" members who usually occupy "posts of importance" are nothing more than professional letter-writers whose duty it is to satisfy Negro complaints by mail, and keep protesting delegations, or discourage them, from storming the various governmental departments and the White House with just grievances. Many of them want Roosevelt to run for a fourth term in order that they may retain their positions at fat salaries and disport themselves throughout the country as real leaders of black folk.

It is important that the Negro have leaders. These should be men of sterling worth, of achievement, of intellect, thoroughly imbued with the ideals of democracy and full-orbed manhood, and with a passion of unselfish service to their country and people. The Negro race cannot afford to swap its inalienable rights for the privilege of securing fat-salaried positions for a small group of men.

* * *

FOR HONEST, constructive and uncompromising leadership, the Negro must contend. Like every other great people, he must know that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. He must realize that men who regard soft political positions carrying profitable salaries, and who will compromise on racial issues for fear of losing these salaries, are not trustworthy as leaders. In this period of national strife, it is high time to dissolve all "Black Cabinets," destroy all bought-and-paid-for leadership, and let real men come to the front to represent the Race. We have them in every city, even in the nation's capital.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

## Voting

OCT 2 2 1941

Voting is the principal part of the contract entered into for the consideration of a democracy with, by and for the consent of the governed. In fact voting is the base upon which the whole structure of free government is founded. It can be refused only and when there is a sinister desire on the part of strictly the enemies of free government to seize upon under hand methods to establish the wishes of the minority or to cut certain elements not to their liking from the privilege of threatening those in power. That is to say when this minority or privileged element succeeds in putting over a candidate of measure, he is not bound in any way for any consideration of those refused the ballot.

Any participation in any measure of subterfuge, which is used to give the color of legality to their scheme, is by no means foreign to friends seeking to overthrow our government of constituted authority.

If the Congress of the United States specified that men with a certain color of hair or eyes only would be allowed to vote on measures coming before that body, it would be hard for the people of the United States to scrutinize the opinions of the congress. If only men of brown eyes are allowed to vote, measures passed by the Congress would represent the wishes of the brown eyed men.

In any system in which primaries are held on any other than political faith, they carry with them no establishment of principle or purpose. There can be no claim of representative party opinion where the color scheme is used as a method of identifying membership and participation.

Be it remembered at all times, there is at work a dissatisfaction which in time may undermine the whole of our claim of a representative process, when men are not allowed to participate in a primary of their faith. Credit reporting agencies and banking houses pay no attention to the color scheme when they look up the rating of an individual. If they did, there would not be a single firm out of the neighborhood of bankruptcy.

OCT 2 2 1941

If we are to survive at all as a republic—a free people of representative government—then we must insist at all times upon a government with the consent of the governed.

In the last few elections there has been a general trend on the part of colored groups toward the Democratic Party. In many of the doubtful states the balance was possibly turned in favor of F. D. Roosevelt in the last two elections by the very people denied to vote their preference in primaries in the Southern States. There are many people in the Southland of the colored group who hav a Democratic political faith. In the proffer of this faith they are met with the chagrin that the Republican Party has never in all its history held a white primary. Nowhere in any state has the Republican Party sought to disfranchise anybody. This liberal record of actual practice is hard for even the northern Negroes to jump over in their contention that their brothers should join up with the Democratic Party.

In every section except the South county and state government are looking out for voters. It does not care what the color of their hair, eyes or skin is. They want numbers and are going out in a big way for them.

OCT 2 3 1941

Voters in the South are like its vast waterpower, mineral resource and industrial possibilities are going to waste. Instead of going out after numbers, there is every scheme and subterfuge to keep men from voting and exercising their preference in who shall levy their taxes, conduct their school boards and represent them in congress.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# Drive To Abolish Poll Tax Is Taken To Whole Nation

MAR 27 1941

Three Southern organizations this week took the drive to abolish the poll tax to the whole nation by initiating a campaign to have the week of May 11-17 observed as "National Anti-Poll Tax Week" from Maine to California.

The three initiating organizations, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and the League of Young Southerners, issued a "Proclamation to the American People" calling upon "all liberty-loving Americans to join with us in the observance of National Anti-Poll Tax Week to the end that democracy in our country may be strengthened by restoring majority rule in the South."

Campaign headquarters to popularize observance of the week have been set up at 622 Masonic Temple Bldg., Birmingham.

"Taxation without representation in eight Southern states is tyranny for all," declares the proclamation. "In our national Congress the representatives of this poll-tax oligarchy have traditionally used their high offices against the interests of the whole American people. Through block purchase and distribution of poll tax receipts by corrupt political machines these representatives are returned to office year after year. Under the rule of seniority, they have secured control of all important Congressional committees."

Although the campaign has just been launched, endorsements of National Anti-Poll Tax Week have already come in from a number of large organizations.

**The Washington Commonwealth Federation writes endorsing the plan: "This state has had fairly progressive representatives in Washington, D. C. The bills our Congressmen sponsor and are interested in have usually died in some committee controlled by poll-tax representatives who cannot be defeated at home because their own people can't vote."**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People writes that it has "for nearly thirty years fought various forms of disfranchisement including the grandfather clause, white primaries, poll tax and denial of the right to vote by means of lynching and mob terrorism."

"We are with you every bit of the way in your fight," declares the United American Artists, CIO.

Endorsements of National Anti-Poll Tax Week have also been received from the American Peace Mobilization, the National Negro Congress and the American Youth Congress.

MAR 27 1941

The three initiating groups are urging all interested organizations throughout the nation to join in sponsoring the observance, which will be centered mainly around the bill by Congressman Lee E. Geyer to abolish the poll tax in federal elections.

MAR 27 1941

**"During the week of May 11-17," states the proclamation, "we call upon the organizations of the American people to join us in a concerted effort to bring the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill to the floor of the House of Representatives for passage. To accomplish this the signatures of 218 Congressmen to a discharge petition must be secured. Only thus can we force the Geyer Bill out of the House Judiciary Committee where it has been bottled up by poll tax Congressmen."**

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

APR 8 1941

We can't agree with Senator Pepper that the poll tax should be abolished by federal law. The South's electoral situation is too special and delicate and too little appreciated elsewhere to make less than dangerous to all parties concerned any rough-handed interference from outside. But we can agree with Senator Pepper that the poll tax should be abolished. It should be abolished by the states themselves. The only way this can be done is by state governors bold, determined and popular enough to insist upon it. Without gubernatorial pressure no legislature is likely to vote away any of its own powers either by poll tax repeal or reapportionment of representation.

APR 8 - 1941

This column has never been in favor of turning the vote over to irresponsible and ignorant people in the South. Demands here for abolition of poll taxes has gone always with demands for a literacy test to take the poll tax's place. Editor Santford Martin, in The Winston-Salem Journal, commenting on a report that the Southern Electoral Reform League proposes now the substitution of literacy tests for poll taxes, says that "abolition of a requirement based upon financial resources for one based on education and intelligence would appear to be a step in the right direction. North Carolina took that step long ago."

* * *

*Amen and amen! Sense, not dollars, should be the prerequisite to voting in the South.*

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

## Poll Tax Audacity

APR 18 1941

One is struck by the very audacity of the legal departments of eight Southern states which have filed briefs with the Supreme Court, upholding racial segregation in violation of the federal Constitution.

These officials—seven from poll tax states—have asked the Supreme Court to rule against Representative Mitchell of Illinois, who was ejected from a pullman in Arkansas because he is a Negro. The Roosevelt Administration inspired the action of these officials, since the Interstate Commerce Commission and its attorney—both on the federal payroll—are defending the Arkansas officials and the jim-crow railroad companies.

It is from the politically-rotten regimes in the South that the Roosevelt Administration receives some of the main support of its war program "for democracy." Yet these same regimes are uppermost in denying elementary democracy to the Negro people and to the impoverished white sharecroppers and workers of the South, none of whom can even vote.

APR 18 1941

Secondly, these poll tax officials are the political tools of the landlords and Southern mine operators who have set out to break the United Mine Workers, continue the starvation wage differential and defeat the just demands of the miners raised under John L. Lewis' able leadership. Moreover, it was Hatton Sumners, the poll tax Congressman from Texas, who raised the Hitler cry of "electrocuting" strikers.

In the fight for the full citizenship of the Negro people in the South, it is clear that the welfare of the entire labor movement is fundamentally involved.

News
Birmingham, Ala.

# Californian Renews Assault On Poll Tax Voting Qualifications

## Geyer Says Only 9.52 Per Cent Of Alabamians Cast Ballots In 1940

MAR 1 3 1941

BY CARROLL KILPATRICK
Special Washington Correspondent
For The Birmingham News

WASHINGTON — The average congressman from a non-poll tax district is responsible to 109,314 electors while the average congressman from a poll tax district is responsible to only 22,175 electors, Representative Lee E. Geyer (D., Calif.), declared Tuesday.

Geyer is author of the bitterly contested proposal to outlaw the poll tax requirement as a prerequisite to voting in a federal election.

Again charging that the poll tax "disfranchises the Southern people, both in the primary and general elections," Geyer inserted in the Congressional Record tables showing the proportion of the total population which voted in the 1940 general election and the per cent of the population taking part in the primaries last year in the eight poll tax states.

The California congressman, who recently has obtained additional encouragement for his bill by interest shown by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Senator Pepper (D., Fla.), declared "We are justified in demanding that each of our colleagues be as responsible to all the people in his district as we are to the people in our dis-

MAR 1 3 1941

"It is obvious," Geyer said, "that the poll tax congressman has an advantage over the other congressmen which is inconsistent with representative government, and unfair to the constituents in every non-poll tax district in the country."

Geyer said the per cent of the total population of Alabama voting in 1940 general election was 9.52 per cent of the total, compared with 51.39 per cent in Indiana, where the largest proportion of the people went to the polls.

Geyer inserted another table, he said, "to set at rest the assertions, so often made on the floor, that the real vote, the heavy vote in the poll-tax districts comes in the Democratic primaries."

The facts are, he said, "that 42 of the 78 poll-tax congressmen had no opposition in the primaries."

But in the 30 poll-tax districts in which primary elections were held, only 12.17 per cent of the total population voted.

"Compare this,' 'he added, "with the 41.79 per cent of the people who vote in the general elections for members of Congress in other parts of the country.

"Compare the figure with the primary elections in South Carolina, which do not require that the voter pay a poll tax in primary elections. There the average vote cast was 51,833, amounting to 16.37 per cent of the total population."

Argus
St. Louis, Missouri

## THE POLL TAX BILL

MAY 2 1941

On another battle front in our fight for our rightful place in a democracy, are arrayed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, the National Negro Congress, the I.B.P.O.E.W., the Alpha Kappa Alpha and other groups, all fighting for the proper enfranchisement of the Negro voter in the South.

At the present time the force of the above-named organizations is directed toward House Bill 1024, the purpose of which is to force the discharge of the House Judiciary Committee whose chairman is Hatton Sumners of Texas who has failed to report the bill out of the committee.

Inasmuch as it will require the signatures of 218 congressmen, Representative Lee E. Geyer of California has introduced this measure to force the discharge of the committee from considering the bill. In order to make sure that this bill is brought up for consideration during the present congress, it will be necessary that all the influence and pressure possible be brought to bear on the congressmen to vote for this measure. Therefore, Negro organizations are urging their groups everywhere to write to their congressmen asking them to support H.R. 1024, for by so doing we will help millions of our black brethren in the South to secure the ballot, which is more powerful as a weapon of defense and offense than all the oratory that has been expended on the anti- lynching bill for the past fifteen years.

MAY 2 1941

Write to your congressman today to vote for H.R. 1024

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

## They Want Us To Pay The Bill

APR 2 4 1941

"How can we pick the pockets of the public for billions of dollars to pay for the war program?" is the important question now before the war profiteers and their servants in the House of Representatives.

Making enormous profits out of government contracts is just half the battle for these greedy men. Their next concern is to make the people pay the bill. They will save their profits and put them in government bonds.

APR 2 4 1941

The profiteers have good friends in Congress. Poll Tax Congressman Doughton, of Georgia, chairman of the House ways and means committee is leading the fight for taxes upon the people and no taxes upon the profiteers.

**Poll Tax Senator Glass of Virginia, told newspaper reporters "universal taxation in this emergency is imperative." Senator Glass means everybody must pay except the money bags he serves.**

While the thought is discouraged, it is not unlikely a general national sales tax may be attempted. The sales tax is already in effect and will be increased on many items, as cigarettes, beer, picture show tickets, automobile tires, gasoline and many other items. All these taxes are paid by the people. So also will be the proposed pay-roll taxes. Just as bad is the proposed compulsory purchase of government bonds.

**Congress passed an "excess profits tax" last year that was a shameful sham. That was not enough betrayal of public interest, so they later amended the law to let the largest profiteers escape.**

APR 2 4 1941

The people paid for the last war, and are still paying. The plan is to make them pay this time.

Enormous profits and low taxes on profiteers is preparing a crop of billionaires from this war, where we had only millionaires last time.

We are in the same old web of sweat and blood for the poor; profits for the rich. It will remain so until the people elect their own kind to represent them in the White House and in Congress.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# We're Too Indifferent to Politics, Says Mrs. Fauset

NOV 2 9 1941

PHILADELPHIA.

Colored citizens must become conscious of their real and potential power in politics Mrs. Crystal Byrd Fauset, special assistant in the Office of Civilian Defense and former Pennsylvania State Legislator declared at St. Cyprians Episcopal Church, Eighty-fifth and Lindbergh Boulevard on Sunday.

Speaking on "Civilian Defense" at Women's Day services, Mrs. Fauset stated that "civilian defense is civilian morale which is unity of America based upon understanding."

NOV 2 9 1941

**Think of Other Countries**

"Having felt the greatest pressure exerted upon a group, we are bitter critics," the speaker averred, "but when bitter, think of conditions in other countries," she added.

Imploring the group to "think seriously of your relationship to family, city, State and government," she outlined various steps to be taken in order that every one may participate in the civilian defense plan.

**Be Good Neighbors**

Aside from offering service at the volunteer headquarters, Mrs. Fauset suggested that a better prepared meal, a better day's work done, or a better understanding with one's neighbor might aid the plan for civilian defense.

NOV 2 9 1941

In her final remarks, Mrs. Fauset pointed out that no group is so indifferent to government as the colored race and urged her audience to become conscious of the race's potential political power.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# Drive To Abolish Poll Tax Is Taken To Whole Nation

MAR 27 1941

Three Southern organizations this week took the drive to abolish the poll tax to the whole nation by initiating a campaign to have the week of May 11-17 observed as "National Anti-Poll Tax Week" from Maine to California.

The three initiating organizations, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and the League of Young Southerners, issued a "Proclamation to the American People" calling upon "all liberty-loving Americans to join with us in the observance of National Anti-Poll Tax Week to the end that democracy in our country may be strengthened by restoring majority rule in the South."

Campaign headquarters to popularize observance of the week have been set up at 622 Masonic Temple Bldg., Birmingham.

"Taxation without representation in eight Southern states is tyranny for all," declares the proclamation. "In our national Congress the representatives of this poll-tax oligarchy have traditionally used their high offices against the interests of the whole American people. Through block purchase and distribution of poll tax receipts by corrupt political machines these representatives are returned to office year after year. Under the rule of seniority, they have secured control of all important Congressional committees."

Although the campaign has just been launched, endorsements of National Anti-Poll Tax Week have already come in from a number of large organizations.

**The Washington Commonwealth Federation writes endorsing the plan: "This state has had fairly progressive representatives in Washington, D. C. The bills our Congressmen sponsor and are interested in have usually died in some committee controlled by poll-tax representatives who cannot be defeated at home because their own people can't vote."**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People writes that it has "for nearly thirty years fought various forms of disfranchisement including the grandfather clause, white primaries, poll tax and denial of the right to vote by means of lynching and mob terrorism."

"We are with you every bit of the way in your fight," declares the United American Artists, CIO.

Endorsements of National Anti-Poll Tax Week have also been received from the American Peace Mobilization, the National Negro Congress and the American Youth Congress.

MAR 27 1941

The three initiating groups are urging all interested organizations throughout the nation to join in sponsoring the observance, which will be centered mainly around the bill by Congressman Lee E. Geyer to abolish the poll tax in federal elections.

MAR 27 1941

**"During the week of May 11-17," states the proclamation, "we call upon the organizations of the American people to join us in a concerted effort to bring the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill to the floor of the House of Representatives for passage. To accomplish this the signatures of 218 Congressmen to a discharge petition must be secured. Only thus can we force the Geyer Bill out of the House Judiciary Committee where it has been bottled up by poll tax Congressmen."**

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

APR 8 1941
APR 8 1941

We can't agree with Senator Pepper that the poll tax should be abolished by federal law. The South's electoral situation is too special and delicate and too little appreciated elsewhere to make less than dangerous to all parties concerned any rough-handed interference from outside. But we can agree with Senator Pepper that the poll tax should be abolished. It should be abolished by the states themselves. The only way this can be done is by state governors bold, determined and popular enough to insist upon it. Without gubernatorial pressure no legislature is likely to vote away any of its own powers either by poll tax repeal or reapportionment of representation.

APR 8 - 1941

This column has never been in favor of turning the vote over to irresponsible and ignorant people in the South. Demands here for abolition of poll taxes has gone always with demands for a literacy test to take the poll tax's place. Editor Santford Martin, in The Winston-Salem Journal, commenting on a report that the Southern Electoral Reform League proposes now the substitution of literacy tests for poll taxes, says that "abolition of a requirement based upon financial resources for one based on education and intelligence would appear to be a step in the right direction. North Carolina took that step long ago."

* * *

*Amen and amen! Sense, not dollars, should be the prerequisite to voting in the South.*

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

## Poll Tax Audacity

APR 18 1941

One is struck by the very audacity of the legal departments of eight Southern states which have filed briefs with the Supreme Court, upholding racial segregation in violation of the federal Constitution.

These officials—seven from poll tax states—have asked the Supreme Court to rule against Representative Mitchell of Illinois, who was ejected from a pullman in Arkansas because he is a Negro. The Roosevelt Administration inspired the action of these officials, since the Interstate Commerce Commission and its attorney—both on the federal payroll—are defending the Arkansas officials and the jim-crow railroad companies.

It is from the politically-rotten regimes in the South that the Roosevelt Administration receives some of the main support of its war program "for democracy." Yet these same regimes are uppermost in denying elementary democracy to the Negro people and to the impoverished white sharecroppers and workers of the South, none of whom can even vote.

APR 18 1941

Secondly, these poll tax officials are the political tools of the landlords and Southern mine operators who have set out to break the United Mine Workers, continue the starvation wage differential and defeat the just demands of the miners raised under John L. Lewis' able leadership. Moreover, it was Hatton Sumners, the poll tax Congressman from Texas, who raised the Hitler cry of "electrocuting" strikers.

In the fight for the full citizenship of the Negro people in the South, it is clear that the welfare of the entire labor movement is fundamentally involved.

Amsterdam News
New York, N. Y.

# Anti-Lynch, Anti-Poll Tax Measures Support Urged

MAY 3 - 1941

Prominent speakers of both races, addressing a crowd of over 1,000 in the auditorium of P. S. 90, 147th St. near Seventh Ave., last Wednesday evening, declared that the Gavagan Anti-Lynching Bill and the Anti-Poll Tax Bills must be passed.

J. Raymond Jones, chairman of the Harlem Committee, sponsors of the meeting, presided, outlined the need of bringing mass pressure in support of the legislation and disclosed plans to organize similar groups throughout the country.

Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, director of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration cited personal experiences in support of the measures, declared that the Ku Klux Klan could never have marched on the campus of her school, Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Fla., had they been passed and in effect.

Relating how he and Congressman Joseph Gavagan, suponsor of the lynch bill had travelled from Maine to California in the interests of the law, Walter White. executive secretary of the NAACP, revealed how in some southern states as few as 5 percent of the people have the right to vote because of poll tax restrictions.

MAY 3 - 1941

Rabbi Harold Mashioff of the Washington Heights Jewish Congregation, Manuel Johnson, member of the organizing committee of the American Federation of Labor and Congressman Gavagan, were among the other speakers.

New York Times
New York, N. Y.

## THE RIGHT TO VOTE

In this city and countless other American communities next Tuesday citizens who take their elections seriously will spend a minute or two marking ballots or operating voting machines. If recent elections are a guide, half or more of those who might have qualified and voted will be derelict. They will be too busy to vote, or the weather will not be right, or they will have social engagements. It may not occur to them that they do more harm to our system of government by their negligence than some of their fellow-citizens do by voting as the bosses tell them. They are the ones who could upset the bosses if they thought it worth the trouble.

NOV 2 1941

The right they disregard has cost trouble enough in the past. It cost the British seven centuries of intermittent trouble, with martyrs in every generation. It cost the French a terrific revolution, and in the misery and humiliation of their present plight they have learned anew what it was worth. In this country it had to be fought for in every colony, was not fully extended to adult white men until two generations after the Revolution, was not achieved by women until 1920, is still denied to most colored people in some States and also, by a misuse of the poll tax, to large groups of white people.

Any present-day attempt to limit the suffrage in this country would be instantly recognized and repudiated for what it would be: a step toward fascism. The election slackers achieve the same end voluntarily by staying at home. They help to discredit democracy. This year of local and scattered elections offers them a chance to reaffirm their faith in the right, duty and dignity which have cost, and are still costing, so much in blood and tears.

NOV 2 1941

Tribune
Philadelphia, Pa

# Urge Citizens To Write Congressmen For Support Of Geyer Poll Tax Bill

MAY 1 - 1941

CONGRESSMAN Lee E. Geyer writes: "At the present time, the anti-poll tax bill is bottled up in the House Judiciary Committee whose chairman is Hon. Holton Sumners of poll tax Texas. To bring the bill before the House for a vote, it will be necessary to obtain the signatures of 218 Congressmen on a petition to discharge the House Judiciary Committee from consideration of the bill. I have filed such a petition, and am now attempting to get the required number of signatures."

This is a bill which should have the aggressive support of every fair-minded member of Congress, regardless of party politics. The fact that a Democrat is pressing for its passage is significant, since it is the Democratic South which is the chief offender in preventing citizens from voting and balking universal suffrage with outmoded poll tax laws.

It should be remembered that these poll tax laws prevent white as well as colored citizens from voting. A certain class of politicians keep themselves perpetually in office by a minority vote because of these statutes. Senators and Congressmen are elected to office from the South with a few hundred votes, while those in other sections must secure thousands.

MAY 1 - 1941

The free ballot should not be based upon wealth or family status. Many people who would vote are stopped cold by these antiquated poll tax laws.

The states which have these laws can not be expected to change them, because the politicians who are in control do not desire to relinquish their hold on the political machinery of their respective states.

Of course, the poll tax laws are not the only thing which prevents colored citizens from voting. However, their abolishment will assist in securing the vote for the voteless millions south of the Mason-Dixon line.

Incidentally, Senator Pepper of Florida is giving the bill his support. And if it gets out of the House, Senator Pepper is pledged to help get it through the Senate.

Congressman Geyer (Democrat) represents the 17th District of California. He is of the opinion that "If we are successful in abolishing the poll tax, it will provide the impetus for guaranteeing to the southern Negro all of his civil rights."

Because of the importance of the Geyer-Pepper Anti-Poll Tax Bill and because immediate action is needed, THE TRIBUNE urges its readers to write to their Congressmen to sign the petition to discharge the House Judiciary from consideration of the bill.

DO IT TODAY!

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

## *Poll Tax Again*

AS President Mordecai W. Johnson, of Howard University remarked recently, "One of the characteristics of a democracy is the two-party system." A two-party system insures a government representative of the people, which is also one of the aims of democracy. Facts revealed by those engaged in the effort to pass the Geyer bill to abolish the poll-tax in federal elections make an interesting commentary upon the functioning of democracy in eight southern states which retain the poll-tax as a prerequisite to voting.

These states, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas, Mississippi and South Carolina scale from 27.9 per cent down to 9.8 per cent in persons 21 years of age and over who participate in elections.

In South Carolina the figures show that only 9.8 per cent of eligible voters participated in the 1940 general election. That is to say, less than 10 per cent of the people of South Carolina who are of voting age took the trouble to go to the polls in a presidential election.

In Virgiina only 20.8 per cent of our citizens of voting age participated in 1940.

The poll-tax proponents say that their states are as well governed as the states which do not have the poll-tax as a requirement for voting. The best way to determine if this is true is to take a look at the educational facilities, the public health facilities, the general living standards of the people and the degree of social consciousness which prevails in these states. We are sure that the investigator would find that they average just about the same per-centages that apply to the voting population.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# Anti Poll-Tax Week Fixed by Elmira Mayor

### Responds to Requests; Map Drive to Push Geyer Bill Fight

(Special to the Daily Worker)

ELMIRA, N. Y., May 16.—The current week has just been proclaimed Anti Poll-Tax Week here by Mayor Maxwell J. Beers, in response to the request of a delegation of members of the local chapter of the National Negro Congress, which appeared before the Elmira Common Council on May 12, with Miss Phillippa Stowe, chairman of the Congress, as spokesman.

A full week of activity on behalf of the Geyer Anti Poll-Tax Bill was inaugurated by the National Negro Congress last Sunday, in connection with the national observance of Anti Poll-Tax Week. A meeting sponsored jointly by the Negro Congress chapter and Local 310, of the CIO United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers on May 11 organized the delegation to the Common Council.

Rev. William Wright, Negro trade union leader and a member of the Congress, and Earle Sheen, secretary of the U.E.R.M.W. in Elmira, were the main speakers, both stressing the importance to labor of the struggle to eliminate the poll-tax from the Southern States. Petitions urging Congressman Cole to sign the petition to force the Geyer Bill out of Committee are being circulated in Elmira, and a delegation will deliver them in person to his home in Bath, N. Y., on Saturday.

The action of the Mayor in declaring this as Anti Poll-Tax Week is deemed locally as recognition that the National Negro Congress, newly formed in Elmira, is here to stay. The Negro community has had to buck the opposition of the local reactionary forces, who have been using the American Legion, the YWCA, and other local groups to bring pressure on the Negro community, to prevent the formation of the local Negro Congress Council.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

**THE SOUTH IN THE SADDLE**

Ideologically the South has won the Civil War because its attitude on the Negro has become national and its attitude on organized labor is about to be accepted. As the bulwark and most dependable unit (thanks to Negro disfranchisement) of the ruling Democratic party, it now dominates the government in Washington as it did prior to March 4, 1861, controlling practically all Congressional committees and the Army and Navy.

Of the 33 Senate committees, 23 chairmanships are filled by Southern Democrats, while 38 of the 47 standing and 7 special or select House committees have Southern Democrats as chairmen.

These are positions of tremendous power, as shown by our own experience with Rep. Hatton Sumners of Texas, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who had to be forced to release the Federal Anti-Lynching bill by signatures of 218 Congressmen (no Southerners!).

Their patronage powers have filled Washington, D. C., and the government service generally with their relatives and friends, and, what is most important for the purpose of this discussion, they are without exception faithful servitors of the selfish, monopolistic economic interests that control both North and South. They are anti-labor, anti-Semetic, anti-alien, anti-Negro and pro-war.

Washington Tribune
Washington, D. C.

# Anent the Poll Tax

This week, ANTI-POLL TAX WEEK was observed by liberal and progressive groups throughout the country. As part of our observance we print a section of a speech delivered by one of our editorial writers, Maurice Gates, before YOUTH WORKSHOP, a group of young writers, actors and artists, in New York, last Sunday evening:

"Originally the poll tax was conceived as a device to prevent the Negro from exercising his franchise. Then they steadily began to include it in their arsenal for use against the impoverished whites of the South. Now it is used to send reactionaries from the South to the Congress of the United States who fight against all progressive measures and institute anti-labor legislation and offer President Roosevelt his main support; his political base in his drive to involve us in this imperialist war.

"The poll tax is responsible for a Hatton Summers who proposes the death chair for those who strike in defense industries. The Lend-Lease bill could probably not have been passed, except with the aid of the poll tax legislators. They are in control of over one-third of the committee chairmanships in the Congress, although they constitute only one-sixth of the membership of the Congress.

"It is in this way that the poll tax, beginning as a measure of repression against the Negro has steadily come to be a measure of repression against the majority of the American People, not only in the South but throughout the country.

"It is to the credit of American liberals that they have seen this development; that they are today actively engaged in pushing the fight for the abolition of the poll tax. What affects one affects all. The poll tax is but one illustration of this. The cause of progress is indivisible. Once this understanding has been gained by increased numbers of the American People, such anti-democratic measures will be blotted out of American life. All support therefore should be given for the passage of the GEYER ANTI-POLL TAX BILL."

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

# Senate Will Hold Poll Tax Hearings

WASHINGTON. — (ANP) — The Senate judiciary committee through its chairman has named a subcommittee to hold hearings on the Pepper-Geyer Poll Tax bill. Members named to the sub-committee are Senators Joseph C. O'Mahoney of Wyoming; Tom Connally of Texas; Murdock of Utah; George W. Norris of Nebraska and Warren Austin of Vermont.

Representative Geyer of California, long a foe of the poll-tax bill, made the announcement from his office and further states that the day and date of the hearings will be announced as soon as it can be set.

52e-1941
The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.



# End Poll Tax, Then Talk 'Americanism,' Dies Told

## Westchester Negro Congress Plans Big Rally to Counter Scheduled 'Patriotic' Meeting to Hear Witchhunter

JAN 8 1941

(Special to the Daily Worker)

WHITE PLAINS, Jan. 7.—Fifty persons prominent in civic life here have addressed an open letter to Congressman Martin Dies protesting his scheduled appearance on Sun., Jan. 12 in the Westchester County Center. **"Go back to Texas, Mr. Dies," says the letter, "and end jim-crowism, lynching and the poll tax before you attempt to tell us that you are truly fighting for Americanism."**

Dies' appearance here is being sponsored jointly by the local organization of Elks and the American Legion as a "patriotic rally."

The open letter was initiated by the local chapter of the National Negro Congress.

**"We, as Americans," the letter declares, love our country and especially its great democratic traditions of equality for the entire people. We revere the principles for which the founders of this great nation shed their blood, namely Crispus Attucks, John Brown Abraham Lincoln, as well as thousands of nameless heroes.**

**"We ask you Mr. Dies, when you speak of Amreicanism, will you tell us of the hundreds of victims of the lynch mobs in Texas? Will you tell us of the ten millions of citizens in Texas and other states of the South who are unable to vote because of the Poll tax?**

"Tell us, Mr. Dies, about the fifth column that keeps thousands of Negro and white sharecroppers in virtual peonage in Georgia, that in the name of 'national unity' jim-crows fifteen million Americans in the armed forces, that permits you to be elected to Congress by a vote of four per cent of the voting population of your district."

In addition to the open letter, the Negro Congress plans to conduct a mass rally as "An Answer to Dies."

**Signers of the protest include the following:**

Rev. P. K. Fonvielle, pastor of Centennial A.M.E Zion Church, Mt. Vernon; Rev. O. Wacter, pastor of Barry Ave. Methodist Church, Mamaroneck; Rev. L. W. Hughes, pastor of Baptist Church, Greenburgh, member of Board of Education of Town of Greenburgh (only Negro member upstate); Benjamin Murrell, president, Mamaroneck Chapter of NAACP; Savila Tillman, president, Coeducational Club, White Plains; John Stroud, president, Comets A.C., Manhattan Park; Leucio Feleppa, vice-president, International Bricklayers, Plasterers and Masons Union, Local 83, Mt. Vernon.

Also Wilbur Wheeldin, executive board member, Hotel, Restaurant and Foodworkers Union, Local 178, New Rochelle; Edna Barnett, United Office and Professional Workers Union; Grant Walker, Westchester Youth Council; Elizabeth Moos, educator, Croton-on-Hudson; William Crawford, State Council, National Negro Congress, New Rochelle; John Yizar, Frederick Douglass Youth Club; Leon Chapman, National Negro Congress, Yonkers; Mrs. Wilhelmina Archer, West Side Mothers Club, New Rochelle; Milton Barnett, American Federation of Teachers, Local 191; Howard Willis, president, Frederick Douglass Youth Club; and Professor Horace Grenell, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
January 8, 1941

## Scores Republicans

To The News and Courier:

Faugh! For a Southerner, a Democrat and, or, a South Carolinian to contemplate, to point out, the advisability of these Southern states, South Carolina included, laying in a political bed and having truck with the national Republican party, brings forth an exclamation of disgust. Passing over the antecedents, qualifications and background of the state (South Carolina) leaders of Republicanism, with just one comment—Benedict Arnold in his day was a scholar, and a gentleman of sorts—I take up the background of the national Republican party, with whom the state party, of a necessity, is associated.

In this we will not deal in anachronisms, such as Carpet-baggers and Reconstruction days. We will not even discuss the race question except, perhaps, to say: that no Democratic aspirant for the presidency of the United States ever went before the electorate standing on a plank the equivalent of No. 7 which the national Republican party (catering wholesale to the negro vote) incorporated into their platform at Philadelphia in 1940 (the reader is asked to look up plank No. 7). However, we are compelled to say, that this plank was a gratuitous insult, thinly veiled, cast unwashed into the face of the South, like unto the gossamer of indecency worn by Salome when she danced before Herod asking for the head of John the Baptist on a charger! These things we will dismiss as unimportant and take up, and discuss, the national Republican party on its record; what it stands for. This party is a government of special privilege, whose attitude toward the "people" is best typified by the utterance of Hamilton—"Sir! the people is a beast!—" It is a party which, while not actually feeding off the flesh of fellowmen, yet, withal openly advocates battening off the labor of fellowmen. It is a party in which "every man for himself; and the devil take the hindmost!" It is a party that breeds economic slaves. And if one will but take time to search through this country's history he will find that the Republican party has much political chicanery, and corruption, deposited on its doorstep.

This is the party which preached isolationism to the American electorate and crucified the immortal Wilson thereon. It was through this instrumentality that the League of Nations, the temple of justice, was brought down, crashing, on the heads of suffering humanity. This act released the Four Horsemen of Apocalypse, to scourge the earth; drenched the hills of Ethiopia with blood; caused the rivers of China to gush forth a crimson tide, and the ravishment of all Europe outside of Germany. It was this political entity that caused the surrender of our most cherished heritage, the freedom of the seas, to our implacable foes and signed with this foe a separate peace, and bound the bargain with a loan of one billion, two hundred million dollars, as yet unpaid. (This was the sum of money which Germany used to rebuild its industrial structure, swamped the world with low cost goods, and set forth on a new war of conquest.)

This is the party which maintains that one dollar per day is sufficient for any laboring man (South Carolinians can live on one-half, so 'twas quoted); the party that beat, bullied and badgered the bonus-marchers; instituted the most gigantic bread lines ever witnessed in America; the party, who, like the leopard, never changes its spots—black and tan—and predatory till the day of doom! But why continue with an endless repetition of accusations. They are known! They are facts! They are history!

The South has nothing in common with the Republican party; it has nothing to gain from such an association. For these southern states, controlling as they do, 124 electoral votes, 46.6 per cent of the total necessary to elect, have within their hands a bargaining power which, maintaining their solidarity, can be used, in the vernacular of venality, to "git" more than the Republican party can afford to pay. In times past the national leadership of southern Democrats was never excelled, seldom equalled, and the statesmen of South Carolina wrote for themselves a glorious page on our country's history. Any man who advises us to surrender our heritage is no friend of South Carolina. Our present need is broad gauged leaders with vision; those who see the passive power that we possess and have the ability to convert it into an active power.

The News and Courier itself has had such a vision; in times past it has advocated: "Byrnes for vice president", recently it was said: "Byrnes for president". Where is the political leader among us who has answered—"yes"—to this nomination?

"COLLETONIAN."

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.
OCT 12 1941

# Funeral Rites For Rep. Geyer Set Tuesday

Funeral services for Representative Lee E. Geyer (Democrat) of California, will be held at 2 p. m. Tuesday at his birthplace, Wetmore, Kans.

The 53-year-old Congressman from Gardera, Calif., a former high school teacher, died shortly after noon yesterday at Walter Reed Hospital of bronchial pneumonia. He had been in ill health for some months.

The funeral train will leave Washington at 6:25 p. m. tomorrow, accompanied by Mrs. Geyer, her son, John J. Geyer, and members of a Congressional funeral committee chosen by the Congressman before he died consisting of Representatives Coffee (Democrat), of Washington; Hill (Democrat), of Washington; Voorhis (Democrat), of California, and Lambertson (Republican), of Kansas.

**Opposed Intervention**

Serving his second term in Congress, Representative Geyer was known for his battles against the poll tax and against intervention in the present war. He was a member of the Postoffice and Post Roads Committee.

OCT 12 1941

Before entering politics he was an instructor in high schools at Hamlin and Corning, Kans., Duncan, Ariz., Los Angeles and Gardena. For a time he was football coach at Bell High School, Los Angeles.

**Was California Assembly Man**

From 1934 to 1936 he was a member of the California State Asnembly, wrich he left to run for Congress in 1936. He was defeated by a small margin but won the seat in the 1938 election. Reelected by a three to 1 majority, he began his second term in the House last January 3.

Representative Geyer served overseas in the World War and was wounded. He was a member of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and Delta Tau Delta Fraternity. He was also a Shriner.

ESurviving are his wife, Mrs. Nelle L. Cordts Geyer, formerly of Overbrook, Kans., and two sons, Robert Lee, a student in Gardena High School, and John J., attending school here.

Capital residence of the Geyers was 630 Dale Street, Silver Spring, Md.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# Registration Officials To Blame for Disfranchisement

JAN 18 1941

WASHINGTON, D. C.- Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, head of the political science department at Howard University, told a scholarly white group in Chicago last week that the severe policies of registration officials in the deep South is the main cause of the mass disfranchisement of the Southern Negro.

Speaking at a session entitled "The Negro in American Politics" before members of the American Political Science Association at its 36th annual convention, Dr. Bunche outlined 16 devices currently employed by Southern registration officials to prohibit or discourage Negroes from registering and voting.

It was the first time in the history of the organization that a session had been devoted to a study of the political status of the Negro. George Snowden, a graduate of Shaw University also presented a paper on "Recent Trends in the Political Behavior of Negroes in New York City."

"Perhaps the most striking feature of the Southern political picture is the low voting ratio, due almost to the disfranchisement of large numbers of poor whites as to the political disqualification of the Negro," said Dr. Bunche.

"The franchise problem of black and white citizens in the South today are inter-related. Negro non-voting of both black and white citizens is essentially a broad derivative of the political and economic structure of the South."

## NO UNIFORMITY OF PRACTICE

According to Dr. Bunche, who has written several volumes based upon a study of the Southern Negro, there is no uniformity of practice as between states as to devices employed in order to prohibit or discourage Negroes from registering and voting.

In some states registration is extremely difficult and quite out of the question as a result of the severe policies of registration officials and the hostility of the community.

Among the most important devices in current usage outlined by Dr. Bunche are the following:

1. Exclusion from the Democratic primary. This is in actuality a "white" rather than a "democrtic" primary, for all whites, whether Democratic or Republican, are frequently admitted to it, while all Negroes are barred.

2. Requiring one or more white character witnesses. Often the Negro applicant must have these appear in person.

**ENFORCEMENT OF LITERACY TESTS**

JAN 18 1941

3. Strict enforcement of the literacy tests against Negro application: i.e., requiring "reasonable" interpretation of the Constitution, and always to the satisfaction of the officials.

4. Putting unreasonable questions to Negro applicants in constitutional understanding or interpretation tests.

5. Severe application of property qualifications and requiring only Negro applicants to show property tax receipts.

6. Basing rejection of Negro registrants on alleged minor mistakes in filling out registration blanks.

7. Evasion, by informing Negro applicants that registration cards have "run out" etc.

8. Requiring Negro applicants to suffer long waits before the officials attend them.

**INSULTS, HUMILIATION, THREATS**

9. Requiring Negro applicants to fill out their own blanks though those of white applicants are filled out for them by officials.

10. Deliberate insults, humiliations or threats by officials and hangers-on.

11. Discarding only Negro applications for conviction of misdemeanors.

12. Requiring enrollment in Democratic clubs, from which Negroes are barred, for primary voting, as in South Carolina.

13. Severe application of the cumulative poll tax to Negro, though not to white voters.

14. Loss of Jobs or threat of loss of jobs by those Negroes who get "uppity" and insist on their right to register.

15. Warning prospective Negro voters in small towns that they will be "marked men" in the white community.

16. Intimidation through physical violence.

Tribune
Philadelphia, Pa.

# Howard Professor Says Registration Officials Scuttle Negro Voting

JAN 16 1941

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, head of the Political Science Department at Howard University, told a scholarly white group in Chicago last week that the severe policies of registration officials in the Deep South are the main cause of the mass defranchisement of the Southern Negro.

Speaking at a session entitled "The Negro in American Politics" before members of the American Political Science Association at its thirty-sixth annual convention, Dr. Bunche outlined sixteen devices currently employed by Southern registration officials to prohibit or discourage Negroes from registering and voting.

It was the first time in the history of the organization that a session had been devoted to a study of the political status of the Negro. Besides Dr. Bunche, another Negro, George Snowden, a graduate of Shaw University, presented a paper on "Recent Trends in the Political Behavior of Negroes in New York City."

**Low Voting Ratio**

'Perhaps the most striking feature of the southern political picture is the low voting ratio, due almost as much to the disfranchisement of large numbers of poor whites as to the political disqualification of the Negro," said Dr. Bunche.

"The franchise problems of black and white citizens in the South today are inter-related. Negro non-voting is more than a mere by-product of racial disunity. Non-voting of both black and white citizens is essentially a broad derivative of the political and economic structure of the South."

According to Dr. Bunche, who has written several volumes based upon a study of the southern Negro, there is no uniformity of practice as between states as to devices employed in order to prohibit or discourage Negroes from registering and voting.

**Policies Held Severe**

In some States registration is extremely difficult and quite out of the question as a result of the severe policies of registration officials and the hostility of the community.

Among the most important devices in current usage outlined by Dr. Bunche are the following:

1. Exclusion from the Democratic primary. This is in actuality a "white" rather than a "democratic" primary, for all whites, whether Democratic or Republican, are frequently admitted to it, while all Negroes are barred.

2. Requiring one or more white character witnesses. Often the Negro applicant must have these appear in person.

**Hit by Literacy Tests**

3. Strict enforcement of the literacy tests against Negro applicants: i.e., requiring "reasonable" interpretation of the Constitution, and always to the satisfaction of the officials.

4. Putting unreasonable questions to Negro applicants in constitutional understanding or interpretation tests.

5. Severe application of property qualifications and requiring only Negro applicants to show property tax receipts.

6. Basing rejection of Negro registrants on alleged minor mistakes in filling out registration blanks.

7. Evasion, by informing Negro applicants that registration cards have "run out", etc.

8. Requiring Negro applicants to suffer long waits before the officials attend them.

9. Requiring Negro applicants to fill out their own blanks though those of white applicants are filled out for them by officials.

**Deliberate Insults**

10. Deliberate insults, humiliations or threats by officials and hangers-on.

11. Discarding only Negro applications for conviction of misdemeanors.

12. Requiring enrollment in Democratic clubs, from which Negroes are barred, for primary voting, as in South Carolina.

13. Severe application of the cumulative poll tax to Negro though not to white voters.

14. Loss of jobs or threat of loss of jobs by those Negroes who get "uppity" and insist on their right to register.

15. Warning prospective Negro voters in small towns that they will be "marked men" in the white community.

16. Intimidation through physical violence.

JAN 16 1941

—A Colored Judge—

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# BLAKELY AUDIENCE HEARS DR. COOPER

**Augusta Pastor Urges Listeners to "Stop Dreaming and Begin Producing".**

JAN 1 3 1941

By W. W. SULLIVAN

BLAKELY, Ga.—The Rev Allen R. Cooper, pastor of Bethel A. M. E. church of Augusta, delivered an Emancipation Day address here last Thursday to an enthusiastic, capacity audience.

"We cannot become a part of this great government until we pay our poll tax and vote," Dr. Cooper said, "because there is no hope for a race that merely dreams and sits down and waits for sweet dreams to come true.

"We cannot dream ourselves to greatness because true greatness comes only by earnest endeavor. Therefore, we must stop dreaming and begin producing.

"Negroes should be more loyal to Negro business institutions. They should join Negro insurance companies so that our young men and women who graduate from colleges and universities will have something to do besides nurse their diplomas.

"Stop trying to sue white schools when they prefer not to teach you," Dr. Cooper declared, "and sit at the feet of black scholars in Negro colleges."

In concluding, the speaker said: "I congratulate President Roosevelt upon his third term election and I believe that he is America's No. 1 leader. However, this country is not safe from foreign invasion so long as the Negro soldier is not given an equal opportunity in the army and navy and in the art of flying planes.

"The Negro loves America and his deeds of valor on the battlefields of the past still will inspire the Negro soldier of today to give every drop of blood that courses through his veins to keep America from the greedy jaws of vicious dictators who seek to rob us of our home of the free and the land of the brave."

Constitution
Atlanta, Georgia

# Jack Williams To Seek Poll Tax Abolition

## Stone Mountain Memorial Completion Also Urged by Legislator.

Abolition of the poll tax and the completion of the Stone Mountain Memorial are two ideas Representative Jack Williams, of Ware, brought back with him to the general assembly.

Completion of the memorial would be worth a million tourist dollars a year to the state, Williams said, adding he would like to see some self-liquidating plan presented to the legislature this session.

JAN 14 1941

"Even as far away from Atlanta as Waycross, we have people stopping constantly and inquiring about the memorial," he said.

Williams stated that after a good deal of thinking he had concluded abolition of the poll tax would be a good measure. Among other things he believes it would bring more women to the polls, and he thinks women in many instances are better informed than men on public questions.

Representative Harvey Roughton, unsuccessful candidate for the post of speaker pro tempore, yesterday foresaw legislation to cancel past due poll taxes, rather than an act to discard the system.

"I think if we cancelled all the past due tax except for $2 it would raise the revenue from that source by $250,000," Roughton said.

Telegraph
Macon, Georgia

# Leave Poll Tax Alone

Certain members of the general assembly, ardent in their support of the Talmadge program of efficiency and economy, have talked of completing the legislative task in 30 days and going home. This is too good to be true, and perhaps it should not be attempted, but it remains true that there is no need to be loading down the hopper with a lot of controversial proposals which can hardly contribute anything to the welfare of the state.

A number of bills have been introduced calling for a constitutional amendment to abolish the poll tax as a prerequisite of the right to vote.

The remote ancestry in this recent agitation is not very creditable and so far as we can see it has not one redeeming quality.

It was born of the radical mischief makers of the North who are always itching to attend to our business. It was sired by the same little group of pink uplifters who insisted on revival of the proposed federal constitutional amendment which would place the raising of all boys and girls up to the age of 18 in the hands of some frowsy spinster in the children's bureau of the labor department and incidentally forbidding a farm boy to drive up the cows or his city sister to wash the dishes.

JAN 18 1941

The greater part of this social "reform" has died a-bornin,' but for some reason a lot of good people here in Georgia have fallen for this bunk of compelling the eight Southern states which now levy a poll tax to abolish it.

* * *

It was recently revealed that out of the 12 thousand young men between the ages of 21 and 36 who registered here in Bibb county 1 thousand could not read or write and had to make their mark in signing the necessary documents.

There is every reason to believe that these registrants represented a fair cross section of the young manhood of the state.

In his great work on The Problem of Poverty John Rustgard has pointed out that of the 1,566,000 recruits for the United States army examined by psychologists in 1917-1918, 25.3 per cent "were unable to read and understand newspapers and write letters nome." He adds that not less than 8 per cent were rejected because they were practically feeble-minded.

The New Republic is quoted as saying that where one-third of the population are on relief they contribute one-half of the births in a given time, or as much as the two-thirds who support them.

* * *

It cannot be said that Georgia illiterates did not have an opportunity to go to school, when we spent 14 million dollars, or $4.49 per capita last year on education.

In these circumstances is there any good reason why we should wipe out the modest obligation of paying $1 a year for the right to the franchise? Is it not clear that with few exceptions the man or woman who is qualified to vote intelligently would be able to pay this modest fee?

But the proof of the pudding is in asking the Northern sponsors of poll tax repeal if politics and elections are on a higher level in those states which have no poll tax than in the South.

It is not in the South that the Kelly-Nash machine of Chicago makes a mockery of the ballot. It is not in the South that Kansas City's Pendergast scandal reeks to heaven. It is not in the South that Eddie Flynn's gorillas dominate the Bronx.

We can think of a thousand things to which the general assembly could more profitably devote its time than repeal of the poll tax.

Let's forget it.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# BILL PROPOSES ABOLITION OF GA. POLL TAX

JAN 16 1941

Senate Bill Number 17, of the Georgia general assembly, introduced Wednesday, proposes the abolition of the poll tax in this state. The proposed law would eliminate the payment of the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting and for other purposes.

Georgia is one of the last remaining eight states which exact a fee from citizens for the voting privilege.

Telegraph
Macon, Georgia

## Aid Absentee Voters

A bill has been introduced in the general assembly which would reduce from 30 days to 10 days the time required for advance notice that an applicant desired to cast an absentee ballot.

Much remains to be done in the matter of revising Georgia's election laws, but the proposed step is at least in the right direction. Anything which will encourage the average citizen to take a greater interest in public affairs and then go to the polls to express his convictions is entitled to encouragement. MAR 15 1941

In passing, we may remark that the supreme court once more has sustained the right of a state to levy a poll tax as part of its powers to regulate the franchise and the "reformers" who have been thinking of getting a federal statute to nullify the poll tax in eight Southern states might as well forget it.

Facilities for casting absentee ballots were long overdue when the first measures were adopted. In this day of rapid transportation there is more travel than ever before in our history. A check-up would reveal that on election day a large number of the qualified voters are on the wing.

Anyone who does travel to any great extent must realize that many trips are more or less impromptu. Certainly it is not always easy for the voter to know 30 days in advance that he will not be in his polling precinct when the election or primary rolls around. MAR 15 1941

Under existing laws ample safeguards are thrown around the absentee ballot and its use is becoming more and more popular every year.

Ten days advance notice ought to serve every purpose and while the session is drawing to a close it is hoped this bill is enacted.

News
Birmingham, Ala.

## Secrecy Of The Ballot

Georgia is trying to devise a secret ballot. Like Alabamians, Georgia voters have become dissatisfied with the practice of numbering ballots, which permits ready identification of the voter because the number on the ballot corresponds with the number opposite the voter's name on the poll list. APR 5 - 1941

Alabamians are all too familiar with the system. In recent elections in this state an attempt has been made to get around the difficulty by numbering the ballots secretly, by means of a concealed mark. Evidently this plan, or some similar one, is now being adopted in Georgia.

The Georgia Legislature recently enacted a law permitting counties to adopt the "secret ballot" reform if they wished. The Fulton County (Atlanta) Grand Jury has just taken action under this law, as *The Atlanta Journal* expresses it, "to insure a secret ballot."

The new law was sponsored in the Legislature by the Fulton County delegation, and, according to *The Journal*, it "provides a means of eliminating the unfair practice of leaving the number on the ballot when it is put into the box," the number, of course, being the same as that beside the voter's name on the registration list. "There are circumstances," says *The Journal*, "under which political bosses could use such knowledge to coerce, intimidate or punish those whose votes they sought to control. But if the serial number is detached from the ballot before it is put into the box, then the vote is really secret."

Continuing, the Atlanta paper comments further on the reform and on the importance of secrecy of the ballot: APR 5 - 1941

The new law prescribes that this shall be done in any Georgia county where the grand jury so recommends. Special provision is made for cases in which a vote is challenged at the polls, so that it may be identified later when a hearing is held. It is hoped that grand juries throughout the state will follow the example of the Fulton Grand Jury in recommending immediate adoption of the plan now authorized. Only thus will the voters of Georgia be assured of a secret and, therefore, a free ballot. This is a matter which strikes to the roots of our democracy. In his recent address on Jackson Day, President Roosevelt said:

"All of the great freedoms which form the basis of American democracy are part and parcel of the concept of free elections, with free expression of political choice between candidates of political parties. For such elections guarantee that there can be no possibility of stifling freedom of speech, freedom of the press and of the air, freedom of worship. These are the eternal principles which are now being threatened by the alliance of dictator nations. Ours is the responsibility of defending these principles which have come to us as our national heritage."

We of Georgia can defend them for ourselves in a vital particular by insisting upon a truly secret ballot. The permissive law which the 1941 Legislature enacted to this end does not go far enough; but, at least, it is a beginning of which every county should take advantage. All of our efforts for governmental reform depend at last on the citizen's actual as well as theoretical right to vote as his own conscience and intelligence direct, without espionage or coercion from any quarter, and to have his ballot fairly counted. This is not guaranteed under our present system of conducting elections. The provisions of the new law, if adopted by counties throughout the state, will be a power for progress and for justice.

This is a step in the right direction in Georgia, just as ours was in Alabama. But from what we hear about the new system in this state, Alabamians generally do not regard the device of concealing the number as a real assurance of a secret ballot. Most people seem to think that if anybody in position to do so wants to find out how votes were cast, it can still be done easily enough.

People argue that whenever a ballot is numbered in any way, whether the marking is concealed or not, it can be identified. Obviously, a ballot that can be identified in case of an election contest, which is the purpose of the concealed marking, could be identified, even if there were no contest, by somebody in position to lay hands on the ballots. APR 5 - 1941

It appears that the only sure way to obtain secrecy of the ballot is through the use of voting machines. In that way the vote is recorded and no one can possibly find out from the machine how the voter casts his ballot. This is one of many advantages of voting machines, and if Georgia really wants a secret ballot, we suggest that it follow Alabama's example and authorize the adoption of voting machines.

Gadsden, Ala., Times
March 26, 1941

## Poll Tax Repeal Loses

Defeat of the proposal to abolish the poll tax in Georgia was not surprising; the surprising thing being that there was anyone in the legislature of this state who favored such a step.

Georgia was one of the states that suffered most severely under the carpetbag rule that the poll tax helped to abolish and is a state where anything suggesting a return to the intolerable conditions of that era should meet with the utmost opposition.

It took years to reestablish white supremacy in Georgia, just as was the case in Alabama, and these were bitter years that no person who values sane and orderly government should forget. Nor should it be forgotten how the new and vastly improved order was brought about.

Many factors entered into the restoration of a sane and desirable order, but none was more important than the poll tax. It proved an effective weapon in behalf of white supremacy because it stood the constitutional test. The states had a right to declare the poll tax payment a prerequisite to voting, and through this requirement government by the white population was reestablished after many years. Colored voters eliminated themselves by failing to pay this tax, and it is astounding to find some white persons who would open the ballot box to a vast number of these persons who were excluded for the express purpose of assuring white supremacy.

To do away with the poll tax would be to bring back the old conditions under which public offices would be filled by colored persons wherever a majority of such persons exist. Throughout the South scores of white judges, county solicitors, members of governing boards, mayors, councilmen, treasurers, school superintendents and so forth would be cast aside to make room for colored officials. It could easily happen in every city and county where the whites are outnumbered. There are many such counties in Alabama.

The truth is that this whole movement to abolish the poll tax is inspired by Communists and egged on by all degrees of parlor pinks and leftists outfits. And back of these elements, that are out to create racial enmities and disturbances of every nature wherever possible, are the advocates of racial equality and the elements that hate the South and would humiliate it by putting the colored population back in the saddle.

Southern negroes themselves are not behind the movement. The vast majority of these negroes are good citizens who are on friendly terms with their white neighbors, and who know that the present situation is best for all concerned. The agitators for the most part are outsiders who have no interest in this section and are merely out to upset the existing order because they don't like the South and wish to see it put back under the yoke.

The astounding thing is that elements like these find some persons in the South who are willing to cooperate with them.

52e-1941
Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryla

# Only 10 Per Cent Voted in Georgia for Talmadge

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

## DUSTIN' — off the — NEWS

—By—
LUCIUS C. HARPER

JUL 26 1941

NEW YORK—In a strong editorial, PM points out that Governor Eugene Talmadge, who last week ousted two liberal white educators from their university positions, was elected by only 10 per cent of the voters in Georgia. The complete editorial follows:

In a disgraceful hearing before a fixed board of regents, Governor Talmadge succeeded this week in getting the dean of the University of Georgia school of education dismissed from his job. The dean's offense consisted in his speaking favorably of schools in which white and colored youths could study side by side.

The governor then threatened to kick all "foreign-born" teachers out of Georgia colleges—and explained that by foreign-born he meant non-Georgians "taught to believe that something is eternally right, such as racial equality."

**Serving Third Term**

Talmadge has been in Georgia politics for twenty-one years and this is his third term as governor. He has run for the U. S. Senate twice and means to run again. This is not the first time he has shocked good Americans with his undemocratic ideas.

There is no point in calling Mr. Talmadge names, but we do need to define him: he is a loud-mouthed, narrow-minded fellow who has called out troops to stop labor organizing; who has preached racial inequality and social inequality, and who said in 1936 "Hitler is a mighty fine man . . . The man must be helping his people or they'd put him out. Ain't it so?"

And he is governor of Georgia. You may say that if the people of Georgia want Talmadge they should be allowed to have him without any advice from a New York newspaper (Ain't it so?)

**10 Per Cent Vote for Him**

The people of Georgia? But only 162,916 persons voted for Talmadge for his present term and there are more than 1,500,000 adults in Georgia according to the 1940 census.

In Georgia, you have to pay a $1 poll tax to vote for governor and if you owe back poll taxes you have to pay them, too. If you are a Negro it is healthier to skip the whole business.

You can't blame the people of Georgia for electing Talmadge when only 10 per cent voted for him!

**Majority Suppressed**

One of the basic ideas of democracy is that the people, collectively, have good sense. The better educated they are, the better their judgment is likely to be.

What has happened in Georgia is that the majority has not been allowed to express its judgment. Talmadge is the product of an obviously cock-eyed judgment.

Is this exclusively Georgia's business? No. An infection in one part of the U. S. A., can hurt the whole country. Besides, if Talmadge can get himself elected governor why can't he get himself elected to the Senate and how will we like that?

**What Others Can Do**

What can non-Georgians do about it? We can urge our own congressmen to support the Federal anti-poll tax bill (which would make voting free in Georgia) and the Federal anti-lynching bill (which would make voting safer in Georgia) and the Federal Aid for Education Bill (under which the Federal Government could help finance schools in Georgia—and help to see that they remained free of local politics).

Maybe, even with these things done, Georgia would elect herself a Talmadge once in a while—but not the same one three times! Not with all the adults in Georgia voting.

—WILLIAM McCLEERY.

## TALMADGE SHOWS WHY THE GEORGIA NEGRO SHOULD VOTE

GOVERNOR TALMADGE of Georgia, who fired four white educators because he said "they promoted social equality in their educational program," has followed the usual course of all white southern politicians who thrive under the one-party system and do not have to account to the Negro—because he is voteless in Georgia—for their stewardship in office. But at the same time Talmadge gets his salary and expense money from taxes paid by Negro citizens. In fact, according to the strict terms of the U. S. Constitution, Governor Talmadge is holding his office through fraud. So are the congressmen and senators from all southern states who are in Washington on population count: where the Negro is counted in their favor on the basis of legislative representation, but counted out at the ballot box. Senator Bilbo of Mississippi is the most glaring example of this type of legislative fraud.

The time is "rotten ripe" for the Negro in the South, with the aid of his brother in the North, to begin stern agitation to participate in the political affairs of his city and state. The time is also "rotten ripe" for the Republican leaders in the national House and Senate either to resurrect the "Reapportionment Bill" once introduced by Representative Tinkham of Massachusetts but defeated by Republicans, in order that the Negro in the South may enjoy the privilege of voting, or fight to reduce southern representation in congress to the actual voting count. This can be done if Negroes, North and South, unite on a definite program to bring it about. It is lawful and guaranteed by the Constitution, but the South, pleading "Negro Domination," has worked on the racial sympathies of the northern white congressman and kept the issue off the floor. You will have few Talmadges and Bilbos if Negroes throughout the nation concentrate on a "Five-Year Plan" to gain the ballot for the black men and women in the Southland, and if Hitler keeps on marching.

JUL 26 1941

## GEORGIA

IF THE BLACK MAN in this country is to achieve and maintain the status of unqualified equality to which he claims that he aspires, he must set to work intensively to map out a program for his own well-being that will be at once definite and comprehensive. Racial cohesion and unity of purpose are necessary to bring pressure to bear upon a fixed objective at a fixed and given time in order to achieve maximum results There is entirely too much squandering of energy, and far too many creeds and beliefs about what is best for the black man, to hasten that hoped-for day when it can be said regarding racial strife, "Swords have been beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks," and conflict shall be no more.

Fewer theoretical vaporings and more hardheaded and world-tested formulas are needed for complete and final emancipation of the black man to become a reality. Every great race of the world, every respected religion or sect, every free nation that has fought for and won its place in the sun, has won by undivided adherence to two vital basic principles—unity of purpose and uncompromising demand for each and every right to which it believed itself justly entitled. Surely our race in the South, where most of our educational institutions are situated, are justly entitled to vote, to say who shall govern them. What kind of democracy is this that permits an ignorant white scavenger driver to cast a ballot to elect a governor, and at the same time forbids a colored college professor to vote? If the southern Negro once believes that he is entitled to the ballot, he will get it, but not till then.

THE BRITISH have with common purpose believed since Lord Nelson vanquished the Spanish Armada that "Britannia shall rule the waves," and must rule the waves and this spirit has made a little island the size of one of our smaller states, mistress of the "seven seas" of the universe.

The Germans dreamed of a Pan-Germanic empire, and so fiercely and forcefully are they pursuing that belief that they are almost overpowering, singlehanded, the most powerful nations of the world. The Jews have believed from time immemorial that upon them fell the mantle, and in them was vested the financial wisardry of the ages, and to this purpose they have clung regardless of suffering, and for this purpose they have fought regardless of woe, until today they are the undisputed money masters of the world. The Catholics, another of the unloved minorities in many countries, have believed in themselves and their mission, and have so unified and concentrated that belief that their resulting power split open the great Democratic party on the issue of proscription and religious tyranny. In all these cases unity of belief resulted in unity of program. This resulted in unity of effort by which these aggressive minorities had power and will to battle on to success.

The black man on the contrary fritters and frets and fumes and stews. He "shilly-shallies and willy-nillies" with disgusting weakness upon issues of vital importance, literally fiddling while the Rome of his hope burns. He is not sure about anything—if he is bombed and blown to atoms in a "restricted locality," his compatriots will divide almost equally on the silly and senseless debate as to whether "he had any business in a neighborhood where he wasn't wanted." If the larger theatres discriminate against him the offending theatre will find numerous black defenders who "would rather attend the neighborhood theatres anyway." The same fatal division of opinion exists in all programs of political, economic and social justice—a division which the white man knows exists, helps to create, and seeks to maintain. If the black man is ever to come fully into his own, his ranks must be closed. His ideas of justice must become unified. His leaders must forget petty jealousies and agree upon a comprehensive program of racial betterment. What better example would the Negro, both North and South, need to hasten and promote this racial solidarity and unity than the presence in his midst of such political frauds as Talmadge and Bilbo?

Afro-American
Baltimore, Marvland

## Walter White Scores Georgia Gov. as "Coward"

NEW YORK. — In a letter of protest to the editor of the Atlanta Constitution, Walter White, NAACP secretary, characterized Gov. Eugene Talmadge's act in ousting four liberal white Georgia educators from their posts as "an act of a coward."

"Disfranchisement keeps Georgia colored people and many whites from helping to select those who represent the State," wrote Mr. White, who is a native of Atlanta, Ga. "Thus Governor Talmadge's act in hitting those who cannot as yet hit back is an act of a coward."

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

## Civic League In Drive For 10,000 Voters

AUG 30 1941

### Meeting Is Set for Next Tuesday Night

The Atlanta Civic and Political League will hold its regular monthly meeting Tuesday night, September 2, 8:30 o'clock at which time plans will be formulated for the drive for 10,000 registered Negro voters in Atlanta and Fulton County.

President John Wesley Dobbs, returned to the Gate City during the week from Buffalo, New York, where he attended the 41st session of the Ancient Egyptian and Arabic order of the Mystic Shrine, and is now devoting all of his time and energy toward working out plans for the registration campaign.

Indications are that thousands of Negroes are eager for an opportunity to show their resentment for the racial animosity of the present political set up.

AUG 30 1941

Adding momentum to the drive of the Civic and Political League is the fact that, for the first time in the history of the Gate City, registrations stations will be setup in various schools, conveniently located for the colored residents.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

## Negroes Urged To Register

SEP 4 1941

### Special Sections Are Listed

Although two special days have been set aside for Negro re-registrants of Fulton County, this does not mean that they are not eligible and cannot register at the Courthouse on other days, an attache of the County Registrar's office made clear Wednesday.

Special re-registration for colored voters who live in the county districts will take place on Friday, September 5. Re-registration will be at the Center Hill School in the Center Hill District and the South Atlanta School in the Ben Hill District.

SEP 4 1941

For colored Atlantans, places of re-registration on Monday, September 15 are as follows: First ward, E. P. Johnson elementary school; third ward, Ashby Street School; fourth ward, Booker T. Washington High School; fifth ward, David T. Howard elementary-junior high school; second and sixth wards, the Courthouse.

The Atlanta Civic and Political League went on record Tuesday night as urging all colored eligible voters of the country and city to take advantage of the re-registration period, either by going to the Courthouse or to the specially appointed places.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

## THE PATH IS OPEN

(AN EDITORIAL)

The importance of becoming qualified to vote has been over a long period of years repeatedly stressed in these columns. Many have responded by paying their poll taxes and getting their names on the registration books.

But to by far the large majority the call to become full-fledged citizens has fallen on deaf ears. This is not as it should be. Of a reported population of almost 100,000 in greater Atlanta, less than 5,000 Negroes are qualified to vote.

SEP 14 1941

It's hardly necessary to repeat here again the penalties in violated civil rights, in discrimination, in disproportionate school allotments and police brutality citizens of a minority group who do not vote must pay. The lesson has already been learned by Negro Atlantans, the hard way—through bitter experience.

In the face of this, it would hardly seem necessary that we should have to plead with Atlantans to become qualified voters. But plead we will until our citizens are awake not only to the dangers that beset a people who do not vote, but to the possibilities of sharing in the benefits of good government that awaits those who do exercise wisely the privilege of the ballot.

Monday, September 15 has been set aside as Re-Registration day for the Negro citizens of Atlanta. The county is providing special registrars at convenient locations to see that your name is placed on the list of qualified voters. You have everything to gain.

SEP

Especially is this true in view of the Supreme Court decision handed down May 26, 1941 holding that the Federal Government, not the states, has the power to regulate primary elections in the states in which the selection of members of Congress is involved.

This decision, which in substance virtually outlaws the undemocratic White Primary holds that a "primary election" which controls the choice of a candidate for election to the Congress "is an election within the meaning of the constitutional provision and is subject ..to ..congressional regulation of holding it. . . . ."

And further ". . . .the right to participate through the primary in the choice of representatives in Congress—a right clearly secured by the Constitution—is. . . the same. . . as the right to vote at the general election."

This decision by a Supreme Court which has shown itself determined to make democracy work, restores to the Constitution the broad provisions of the Fifteenth Amendment.

No greater incentive should be needed to stir indifferent Negro Atlantans from their apparent apathy toward exercise of the ballot. The path has been opened. There remains but one stumbling block to political independence. And that is lack of names on the registration books.

The removal of this last barrier is clearly up to us. Negro Atlantans should not only keep all of the clerks at the special re-registration booths busy Monday, but those who have never been registered should file into the Courthouse in ever increasing numbers to perform this vital duty of a good American citizen.

After September 15, the county should have not 5,000 but at least 25,000 qualified Negro voters, no less. Do your DUTY!

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

## Walter White Scores Georgia Gov. as "Coward"

NEW YORK. — In a letter of protest to the editor of the Atlanta Constitution, Walter White, NAACP secretary, characterized Gov. Eugene Talmadge's act in ousting four liberal white Georgia educators from their posts as "an act of a coward."

"Disfranchisement keeps Georgia colored people and many whites from helping to select those who represent the State," wrote Mr. White, who is a native of Atlanta, Ga. "Thus Governor Talmadge's act in hitting those who cannot as yet hit back is an act of a coward."

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

## Civic League In Drive For 10,000 Voters

AUG 30 1941

### Meeting Is Set for Next Tuesday Night

The Atlanta Civic and Political League will hold its regular monthly meeting Tuesday night, September 2, 8:30 o'clock at which time plans will be formulated for the drive for 10,000 registered Negro voters in Atlanta and Fulton County.

President John Wesley Dobbs, returned to the Gate City during the week from Buffalo, New York, where he attended the 41st session of the Ancient Egyptian and Arabic order of the Mystic Shrine, and is now devoting all of his time and energy toward working out plans for the registration campaign.

Indications are that thousands of Negroes are eager for an opportunity to show their resentment for the racial animosity of the present political set up.

AUG 30 1941

Adding momentum to the drive of the Civic and Political League is the fact that, for the first time in the history of the Gate City, registrations stations will be setup in various schools, conveniently located for the colored residents.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

## Negroes Urged To Register

SEP 4 1941

### Special Sections Are Listed

Although two special days have been set aside for Negro re-registrants of Fulton County, this does not mean that they are not eligible and cannot register at the Courthouse on other days, an attache of the County Registrar's office made clear Wednesday.

Special re-registration for colored voters who live in the county districts will take place on Friday, September 5. Re-registration will be at the Center Hill School in the Center Hill District and the South Atlanta School in the Ben Hill District.

SEP 4 1941

For colored Atlantans, places of re-registration on Monday, September 15 are as follows: First ward, E. P. Johnson elementary school; third ward, Ashby Street School; fourth ward, Booker T. Washington High School; fifth ward, David T. Howard elementary-junior high school; second and sixth wards, the Courthouse.

The Atlanta Civic and Political League went on record Tuesday night as urging all colored eligible voters of the country and city to take advantage of the re-registration period, either by going to the Courthouse or to the specially appointed places.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# THE PATH IS OPEN

(AN EDITORIAL)

The importance of becoming qualified to vote has been over a long period of years repeatedly stressed in these columns. Many have responded by paying their poll taxes and getting their names on the registration books.

But to by far the large majority the call to become full-fledged citizens has fallen on deaf ears. This is not as it should be. Of a reported population of almost 100,000 in greater Atlanta, less than 5,000 Negroes are qualified to vote.

SEP 14 1941

It's hardly necessary to repeat here again the penalties in violated civil rights, in discrimination, in disproportionate school allotments and police brutality citizens of a minority group who do not vote must pay. The lesson has already been learned by Negro Atlantans, the hard way—through bitter experience.

In the face of this, it would hardly seem necessary that we should have to plead with Atlantans to become qualified voters. But plead we will until our citizens are awake not only to the dangers that beset a people who do not vote, but to the possibilities of sharing in the benefits of good government that awaits those who do exercise wisely the privilege of the ballot.

Monday, September 15 has been set aside as Re-Registration day for the Negro citizens of Atlanta. The county is providing special registrars at convenient locations to see that your name is placed on the list of qualified voters. You have everything to gain.

SEP 1

Especially is this true in view of the Supreme Court decision handed down May 26, 1941 holding that the Federal Government, not the states, has the power to regulate primary elections in the states in which the selection of members of Congress is involved.

This decision, which in substance virtually outlaws the undemocratic White Primary holds that a "primary election" which controls the choice of a candidate for election to the Congress "is an election within the meaning of the constitutional provision and is subject ..to ..congressional regulation of holding it. . . . ."

And further ". . . .the right to participate through the primary in the choice of representatives in Congress—a right clearly secured by the Constitution—is. . . the same. . . as the right to vote at the general election."

This decision by a Supreme Court which has shown itself determined to make democracy work, restores to the Constitution the broad provisions of the Fifteenth Amendment.

No greater incentive should be needed to stir indifferent Negro Atlantans from their apparent apathy toward exercise of the ballot. The path has been opened. There remains but one stumbling block to political independence. And that is lack of names on the registration books.

The removal of this last barrier is clearly up to us. Negro Atlantans should not only keep all of the clerks at the special re-registration booths busy Monday, but those who have never been registered should file into the Courthouse in ever increasing numbers to perform this vital duty of a good American citizen.

After September 15, the county should have not 5,000 but at least 25,000 qualified Negro voters, no less. Do your DUTY!

52e-1941

GEORGIA

## Agrees on Poll Tax

We take pleasure in publishing in the letter column of The Telegraph a communication from A Reader who is kind enough to commend us for a recent editorial urging the general assembly to kill a pending resolution looking to the abolishment of poll taxes as a prerequisite to the exercise of the ballot.

In the course of that editorial we said we could suggest "a thousand reforms" far more worthy than doing away with the poll tax, and our correspondent suggests that we bring forward some of the suggestions.

It is clear that we took in a considerable amount of territory and if space permitted we could make good on it, but for the present we will go no further than to offer a hint which is also in connection with our elections laws and that is to apply every safeguard to our primaries that is now applied to the general election and to clarify the law as to the time at which primaries shall be held.

The primary has been a plant of slow growth. Originally it was looked upon simply as a show of hands within the party and few legal restrictions were thrown around it.

But in a state like Georgia, where one party is dominant, nomination is equivalent to election and it is time to give full recognition to that fact by throwing around the primary all the safeguards of an election.

Democratic executive committees in the various counties interpret the law to suit themselves, as to the times for holding primaries, and they range over a large part of the calendar. The law should be made absolutely plain.

But we are not going to wander too far afield. We have no suggestion more important than to kill this proposal that the right to vote in Georgia shall not be restricted by the payment of $1 a year, which goes to the cause of education.

And when 1 thousand out of 12 thousand Bibb draftees cannot read or write we certainly need more education, even if compulsory attendance at school has to be made more rigid.

## *Keep Poll Tax*

Editor The Telegraph:

You are to be congratulated on your article, Leave Poll Tax Alone, in Jan. 18th Telegraph. That is the smallest burden that could be put on the American people, and any man or woman who is eligible to express a preference for a candidate for any office would be glad of the privilege to contribute the sum of one dollar annually for that privilege.

A man or woman who has patriotism enough to pay that dollar, would not sell his vote. [Better pass a law to punish vote-buying], and none other could vote.

Even the smallest salaried, on relief, could make a sacrifice once a year for the privilege of knowing they were contributing their bit instead of being one of the "two-thirds being supported, now, by the other one-third" of the population.

There is an age limit to even this small tax, but up to that time quite a nice revenue is available to the state from those who are glad to contribute that amount.

We are glad some of the special reforms "has died aborning" and from the statistics you give us, there is no excuse for the 12 thousand registrants in Bibb county that one thousand could neither read or write.

With tuition free, free school books, [many of them never opened], free clinics, free lunches, free clothes for many, there is no excuse for such a state of affairs in Georgia as this. Here's where we need some legislating and not on poll tax.

We hope, Mr. Editor, you will give us more of a thousand things the assembly could "more profitably devote its time to than the repeal of the poll tax."

It's time that Georgia [as has Louisiana], did something about it. I hope our representatives will regard your article, and the state profit by it.

Macon. A VOTER.

Blakely, Ga. News
January 23, 1941

Among the numerous bills already dropped into the legislative hopper is one to abolish the poll tax in this state, the proposal to be submitted to the people in the form of a constitutional amendment. This bill should be killed in committee, but is probably going to be recommended for passage. It is hoped the legislature will kill the proposal, which would deprive the state of much-needed revenue and at the same time lead us a step nearer the enfranchisement of the Negro. It's a poor citizen, indeed, who is not willing to pay at least one dollar for the right of franchise. Let the poll tax stand!

## Letters

### *Keep The Poll Tax*

Editor The Telegraph:

Your editorial in The Telegraph recently in regard to our poll tax hit the nail squarely on the head. There is very little sentiment among our people for the abolition of the poll tax. The first opposition I heard against this law was a bill introduced in congress to abolish the law in all the Southern states. This bill had support from some of the same bunch of radicals that supported the anti-lynch bill and is an insult to the south. Oh, some people say if we would abolish the poll tax more people would vote. Well, we had our state and national elections last year and more than one hundred thousand who were registered and paid their tax failed to vote.

There's a reason and it is not the poll tax but the one party system. Our poll tax is a safeguard against corrupt political machines. I am old enough to remember the bitter campaigns in the early 90's. You know both sides fought to get the Negro votes and all the whites that they could purchase with whiskey or money. Families were divided and often brothers wouldn't speak. If we abolish our poll tax we are inviting these same conditions again.

Chula. T. J. ENTREKEN.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

# INTRODUCE BILL TO KILL PAST DUE POLL TAX

### Legislature Of Georgia To Ponder Abolition Of Barrier To Ballot

ATLANTA, Ga. — The struggle to abolish poll taxes became an issue before the state legislative body of Georgia last week with the introduction of a bill to eliminate past due poll taxes in the state.

The measure, introduced by Representative Kendrick of Fulton county, would greatly increase the numbers of Negro voters, since registration restrictions in Georgia are few except for the tax payment requirement.

The Kendrick bill is the third attempt at introducing poll tax legislation in the Georgia law-making bodies. Others are the Mimms bill and the Drake bill, both of which provide for completely ending the tax. The bills have been referred to the committee on privileges and elections for consideration.

Under the present Georgia law, poll taxes are collectible for every year from 21 to 60 years of age. No voter is permitted to go to the polls unless all previous taxes are paid up. In addition, there are penalties attached for late payment of the tax in the form of a seven per cent interest fee and a collection fee.

Georgia voters are anxious to see the state follow the example of Florida, Louisiana, and North Carolina which all within recent years have done away with the outmoded poll tax laws and thus increased the number of voters 100 per cent and over. The legislation will be of particular benefit to Negro citizens who have been rendered practically voteless by the tax requirement.

Atlanta Ga. Journal
September 16, 1941

# Negro Voters Now Being Reregistered

Fulton County election officials Monday wound up their campaign to reregister all qualified voters as provided by a new state law, by reregistering Negroes whose names appear on the city voters' list. The old list numbered 2,121.

"Straggler" voters—those who failed to reregister at the time and place specified, continued to register in small groups Monday at the Courthouse. All comers will be accommodated in an effort to produce a truly representative voters list, it was announced.

The next step in the program, now under way, is the registration of those eligible to vote for the first time. These include former nonresidents who have lived in the state one year and the county, six months. Youths who have just become 21 years of age and women who had never registered before.

# Georgia Teachers And The Ballot

Doctor J. W. olley,. secretary treasurer, and B. T. arvey,. president, of the Georgia State Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools have released their call for the annual meeting of the Association tho meet, Saturday, February 22, at Macon, our central city. In stating what questons or problems are to claim the time and attenton of the leaders who belong to that organization the call mentions the following: 1—The question of pensions for Georgia public school teachers, and 2—The question of equalization of salaries of teacher in our state.

In reference to the first point attention is called to the fact that a bill has been proposed in the Georgia Legislature which would pension all the members of the white state teachers association whic has a membersip of the larger part of the fifteen thousand white teachers in the state, the association thikns the bil may have a good chance to pass becaruse the fifteen thouand white The Negro teachers (seven thousand of them) are not voters.,, teachers are practically all voters.

Obsrevations and Comments

It might have been further stated that very few of the Negro teachers are members of their state organization. If a law were passed that all Negro teachers holding for the current year should be membership in their organization pensioned the state would have to provide for less than two thousand of them. This is in marked contrast to the Negro teachers of our neighbor state—South Carolina where there are more members of the state teachers organization than there are teacers in the state. That is as it should be here.

The other point of salary equalization, attention will doubtless be called to a recent newspaper release in which it was stated that State Superintendent Collins said that the question of salary equalization has not yet been raised with him. THIS IS NOT SURPRISING IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE DIRECTOR OF NEGRO EDUCATION IN GEORGIA STATED AT THE LAST ANNUAL MEETING of the Asociation that the time for salary equalization agitation hsa not come in Georgia" The Journal continues to disagree.

News
Birmingham, Ala.

# Norris Will Aids Fight On Poll Tax

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Senator Norris (Ind. Neb.) advocated Friday the repeal of laws making payment of a poll tax a prerequisite for voting.

He told newsmen he would support a bill by Senator Pepper (D., Fla.) to prohibit states from making the poll tax a voting requirement. Eight Southern states have such laws.

He added that he would do all he could to assure a hearing on the Pepper measure by the Senate judiciary committee, of which he is a member.

"The free, untrammelled, uncoerced right of all to vote is the essence of a democracy," Norris declared. "It is particularly important that such rights be preserved at this time when abroad dictatorships are on the march."

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Georgia Solons View Decision As Aim At South

WASHINGTON,—(SNS)— A Supreme Court ruling which gives Congress power to regulate state primaries Wednesday was viewed by Georgia congressmen as a move aimed at the South.

Those commenting said they would fight any attempt to pass laws carrying the principals of the decision.

Comment included:

Senator Richard B. Russell: "I am confident that under the Constitution such a thing never was contemplated."

Representative Carl Vinson Whelchel. Ninth District: "It's a blow to the South. It was aimed at us."

Representative Carl Vinson Sixth: "I hope we can preserve our white primaries."

Representative Paul Brown, Tenth: "Im a sorry I haven't the respent for the Supreme Court I once had—especially in view of this decision."

Representative Stephen Pace, Fourth: "I hope it doesn't mean what I'm afraid it means."

Representative Malcolm C. Tarver. Seventh: "It constitutes an invitation to Congress to meddle in state primaries, which too many members of Congress will be prompt to accept."

Representative Sidney Camp, Fourth: "It's a great blow to our

Gadsden, Ala., Times
February 14, 1941

# Ill-Advised Action

It is difficult to believe that the Georgia League of Woman Voters took the trouble to go into the facts before coming out in favor of the repeal of the existing poll tax law.

In announcing its position, the publicity department of the league issues a statement in which it is said "The league believes that when democracy has its back to the wall in most of the world it is imperative that every section of this nation bulwark the right of its citizens freely to vote."

Before determining that the vote shall be given freely to all elements of the citizenship, the League of Woman Voters of Georgia well might have taken another squint at "Gone With the Wind" and thereby gained a fresh conception of some of the things that happened in the South when the carpetbaggers were herding newly admitted "citizens" to polling places while federal troops stood around with bayonets pointed at Southerners who were being subjected to dominance by a race of former slaves.

The yoke was removed from the neck of the South and white supremacy was made possible only when the poll tax came into being. Thus it has served a purpose of infinite value to the South and Southerners of today who fight for its abolishment are inviting a renewal of the intolerable conditions of long ago, whether they know it or not.

The chief exponents of poll tax elimination in the South are the League for the Advancement of the Colored Race and the Communist Party, which is trying to organize the negroes of the South, and informed Southerners should go into the matter with the greatest care before lining up with such organizations on a proposition so shot with trouble for the South.

Telegraph
Macon, Georgia

# House Scorns Poll Tax Plan

ATLANTA, [AP]—The Georgia house by a voice vote defeated an effort to abolish the poll tax as a requisite for voting, but approved 109 to 38 a senate bill requiring voters to sign an identification book."

The poll tax question came up in the form of an amendment to the senate's identification book bill. Rep. J. Bush Mims of Miller offered the amendment, stating "you all know the poll tax is rotten."

Mims said he did not think doing away with the poll tax would increase the Negro vote particularly, and added:

"It's the white primary law that keeps the Negro from voting."

The identification book bill, aimed at eliminating illegal voting, would become operative in any county in which it received approval of two successive grand juries.

Atlanta, Ga Constitution
May 29, 1941

# Negroes Will Discuss Proposed Amendments

Negroes of Atlanta will meet at the colored YMCA on Butler street tomorrow night at 8 o'clock to discuss the constitutional amendments to be voted upon in the general election June 3.

E. L. Collier, well known figure around the capitol, where he serves as head porter to Speaker Randall Evans, and J. W. Dobbs, president of the Atlanta Voters' League, will be the principal speakers. Opposing the annual assembly, but favoring a four-year term, they will urge a record turnout of Negro voters throughout the state on June 3.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Where To Get Registered

**Special re-registration facilities will be provided at four Atlanta schools Monday, September 15 for Negro voters. If you have not received a card do not go to these schools. Instead it will be necessary for you to go to the Fulton County Courthouse on Pryor Street.**

**The schools where those already registered may re-register are Washington High, David T. Howard Junior High, E. P. Johnson and Ashby Street. Clerks will be on duty from seven a. m. until seven p.m.**

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Register And Vote, Walden Tells Group

## NAACP Defense Fund Chairman Praised

NOV 10 1941

"The masses of people have not solved their problems; civic-minded, religious gentlemen have carried the burden of the majority," asserted Col. A. T. Walden, past president of the organization, as he spoke for the Atlanta Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at the public mass meeting of its Defense Committee Sunday afternoon at Mt. Zion Baptist church, the Rev. J. T. Dorsey, pastor.

The prominent Atlanta lawyer asked forcibly:

"What good is money in the bank when it is not used for the civic benefit and uplift of our people?"

Mr. Walden said the problems of our race can never be solved until every man is a registered voter and taxpayer. He cited certain laws that are peculiar to the City of Atlanta and State of Georgia, explaining why they should be wiped off the statute books but insisting that the only way this can be achieved is by way of the ballot.

The lawyer praised Mrs. Ruby Blackburn, chairman of the N. A. A. C. P. Defense Committee Rally, and opined that if the people will support her in this defense drive they will get what they want as there is no harder worker in the organization than Mrs. Blackburn. He said the present defense rally, under NAACP sponsorship, is the first of its kind anywhere in America.

NOV 1 01941

T. M. Alexander, young president of the Atlanta NAACP, said he noticed a definite lack of interest among college and professional people in the civic life and efforts of Atlanta that is a marked handicap to effective advancement. He expressed the view that if the enlightened group would work as diligently as the less formally educated masses a high degree of efficiency and achievement could be reached.

NOV 1 01941

Mrs. Blackburn appealed for the cooperation of all the people of Atlanta and said that she wasn't tired of working, that she was just beginning, that funds were needed and that she and her helpers would not slacken until they were raised.

W. A. Quillian of East Point, an official of the North Carolina Mutual branch insurance firm here, pledged the 100 per cent cooperation and support of their agents.

John Wesley Dobbs, president of the Atlanta Civic and Political League, was in charge of the appeal an dreiterated the indispensable need of registered voters and taxpayers by the wholesale. He also said a defense treasury is needed to back up the rights of Negroes in this city.

NOV 1 0 1941

Mr. Alexander, at the close of Sunday's exercises, said encouraging progress is being shown in the drive thus far and that he felt sure Mrs. Blackburn and her co-workers would not be satisfied with anything but a banner report.

Rev. Mr. Dorsey made appropriate remarks and invocation which came at the beginning of the program was by H. S. Murphy, local businessman and civic leader. Music was furnished by the congregation, the Mt. Zion choir, and the William Harper singers. Presiding was Principal C. L. Gideons.

Atlanta, Ga. Constitution
December 3, 1941

# The Pulse of the Public

*The Constitution invites expression of opinion by its readers. This column is open for that purpose. All communications must be signed and all are subject to editing for conservation of space. Brevity makes argument effective and impels attention.*

**NEGRO REGISTRATION NO THREAT TO WHITES**

Editor, Constitution: In Sunday's Constitution, among the letters expressing The Pulse of the People, Miss Mary C. Lee wrote a letter stigmatizing the increase in Negro registration to vote, as a dangerous threat to white supremacy. In this idea, she was unduly alarmed. White supremacy as she understands it, is not in danger, or threatened by Negro domination. White people in America ought not to regard Negro voters as a menace or threat to white supremacy, but as a compliment to real democracy. If white supremacy cannot take care of itself, without abridging the rights and opportunities of a weaker race, it ought to get out of the way of democracy, that permits all the people to have a voice, vote and representation in the government they fight to preserve and are taxed to support.

Had Miss Lee taken the time to inform herself, she would have found out that no ward in the city had a majority of Negro people over white people; and that when the number of city wards some years ago were laid out, the ward lines were so gerrymandered that it would be impossible in future for the Negro population to outnumber the white population. Therefore, Miss Lee is unduly alarmed about a physical impossibility. This good woman ought to appreciate her neighbors well enough to help them all qualify to vote, without regard to race or color. Make common cause for the good of all, is Christianity.

I am a Negro man, but confess the Negro is not prepared to take over and run this government, and the white man has no cause to fear this calamity, and if he has faith in his own intelligence, he can afford to be fair. He can afford to help every Negro be a good citizen and voter without prejudice to majority rule.

The negro does not want to dominate the white man in government; all he wants, and he is entitled to it, and will fight to get it, is a voice in the government that fixes his weal or woe. He wants representation along with taxation; and he desires to have the white man understand that he feels just like all Americans felt in 1776, when America severed her allegiance to Great Britain and declared herself free and independent from taxation without representation. As white men felt then, Negroes feel now; that "taxation without representation is tyranny." All Negroes appeal to Miss Lee and those of her school of thought, to be fair and just in the administration of government affairs; that public office is a public trust, and is to be administered in the interest of all the people, and not a part of the people. The Negro wants a working democracy based upon the principles of Christianity.

BENJAMIN J. DAVIS.

Atlanta.

Atlanta, Ga. Constitution
November 30, 1941

**NEGRO REGISTRATION SEEN AS DANGEROUS**

Editor, Constitution: While your newspaper has taken the time and expense of ridiculing and lambasting the Governor of our state, the evil against which he is fighting has been growing by leaps and bounds. Not one word of truth has your paper given the public of what is going on right here in Fulton county. If you had the interest of the people of Fulton county and Georgia at heart you would have warned them of the seriousness of their names not being on the registration books. Thousands of white citizens of Atlanta are not registered because of the fact that they do not know the books are still open and will be open until May 6, 1942. One or two small articles have appeared in your paper and they have left the impression that the registration books would close in a short time after the articles appeared. While the white people of our state have been sleeping, Negroes have been working day and night organizing the "Colored League of Voters" and church organizations are urging their followers to register at once. The result is: the largest colored registration in the history of Fulton county is now going on. Negroes—young and old—are going to the tax collector's office every day by the dozens. Negro property owners, past 30 years of age, who are not required to pay poll tax, are being carried to the registration office and registered.

Just what is behind all this sudden registration of Negroes in Fulton county? Has a political aspirant an idea that he might enter a general election and poll the Negro vote of Fulton county, or is it the work of Communist agents in our midst?

There is an undercurrent spreading among us to have the next general assembly change the laws on the election of the city officials of Atlanta. At the present time our aldermen and councilmen are elected from their own ward and not the city at large. This is what will happen should that occur: since a number of our wards have a larger Negro population than white. A Negro candidate can be entered in the general election and with an overwhelming Negro registration be able to defeat the white candidate who has already been nominated in the white primary.

Instead of keeping behind the people of Fulton county and urging them to register, you spend all your time trying to discredit and disgrace our Governor over the whole nation. He is fighting to uphold the traditions of our great southland. He knows of the evil we are facing as well as you do. Only he has the courage to tell the people about it. He knows our schools and libraries are full of dangerous books urging racial equality. Books young untrained minds will absorb, and once the poison is planted, nothing will erase.

Are we, the pure whites of the south, going to sit idly by and see colored doctrine dominate this "Lily White Land" of ours? Or shall we answer the challenge of this insidious monster and fight him with the strongest weapon we have—our vote? We must urge every white person, both young and old, who is over 21 years of age to register now.

God give us more men like Eugene Talmadge, who has the strength and character to stand up for the supremacy of the white race. One day he will go down in our history as the greatest friend the white man ever had. A greater and holier man than he was persecuted and even crucified for speaking the truth, but the truth preached lived to spread throughout the world. Even so will the truths that Eugene Talmadge preaches today spread throughout our southland and bring light to those who go on blindly, thinking they are safe from the evils within.

MARY CLYDE LEE.

Atlanta.

52e-1941

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# 5,000 Buttons To Be Given Qualified Voters

OCT 8 - 1940

## Names of All Eligibles To Be Published

"I Am a Voter—Are You?"

These six little words will be printed on 5,000 buttons and then circulated among colored Atlantans who qualify themselves to vote in coming elections, according to plans of the Civic and Political League which met Tuesday night at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Recommended by the League's board of strategy, which held a business meeting at the Masonic Temple on September 23, the recommendation was adopted by a unanimous vote at the Tuesday night session. Approximately 50 members of the League were present.

John Wesley Dobbs, president, explained that the buttons will have a background of blue with white letters. The 5,000 buttons will cost approximately $70.

### BADGES OF HONOR

Mr. Dobbs said the buttons will serve as badges of honor to all qualified colored voters and also will increase civic interest throughout the city.

The buttons are expected to be ready for distribution at the next monthly meeting of the League.

Several other recommendations by the board of strategy were adopted by the League members. They endorsed moves to:

**1. Obtain a list of Negro voters by December 31, 1941 from the County Courthouse and publish same.**

**Encourage all members of the League to become registered voters.**

**3 Divide League members in two divisions:**

**a. Active members.**

**b. Associate members.**

**4. Urge teachers in the public schools to develop a voting spirit among students.**

### STUDENT SOLICITORS

**5 Use high school students as solicitors for the purpose of creating voting interest in specified areas.**

Mr. Dobbs explained that active members of the league will be those who pay city and county taxes and take out at least a $1 membersship fee with the League. Associate members will be those who pay city and county taxes but fail to take out membership with the League.

It was a sprited meeting with President Dobbs leading the discussions.

OCT 8 - 1940

He told of a recent trip to the East where he saw Negroes playing important roles in civic affairs and holding important city positions. He said with 10,000 colored voters in Atlanta, local Negroes could do the same things.

He referred to the recent kicking of a colored woman in the mouth by a white man as an "awful" thing.

"This type of thing may happen to any colored woman as long as we stand by and let it go on," the president declared.

The Civic-Politicl League adopted Thursday of each week as Negro Registration Day.

The League will have a worker stationed at the Courthouse each Thursday to assist colored people to register.

Chicago Bee
Chicago, Illinois

# A Lily-White Judiciary

NEXT Tuesday the voting public will go t the polls of Cook County to elect twe nty one Superior court judges. The Democra Party has submitted a so-called coalition ticket to the voters and the Republican Party ha offered them the choice of voting for its candidates on a separate ticket.

NOV 2 1941

It is singularly significant that of the forty-two candidates none are Negroes. It is also significant that not a word of protest has been uttered by colored political leaders for this omission. It is also interesting to note that few of our civic organizations have used their influence in seeing that the names of Negroes are placed on the judicial ticket.

Are our political leaders afraid to cry out against such omissions? Are they afraid that their own standing will be jeopardized if they should try to upset the status quo? Do they have a feeling of chagrin when they are extolling the virtues of candidates of a lily-white ballot? Are they not compromising the rights of 300,000 colored people?

NOV 2 1941

In the history of the Superior and Circuit courts of Cook County no Negro has ever set in a judicial capacity. It is asking very little of the two major parties to request that the names of colored candidates be added on the ticket. We deserve it. In point of numbers of voters in the colored race we request it. Because we have many qualified lawyers capable of exercising judicial functions with honor and distinction we demand it .

In New York City some four colored judges sit on the bench. There are colored judges in other cities where the proportion of colored voters are less than in Chicago. We have some of the best lawyers in the country from which to choose. We have plenty of business in the courts to justify our having a hand in the administration of justice.

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

# Court Decrees U. S. Rule In State Primaries

MAY 27 1941

## Party Votes, Convention Affected By Decision; Murder Verdict Voided

By WILLIAM R. SPEAR
Associated Press Staff Writer

WASHINGTON, May 26.—The Supreme Court ruled today that state primaries and nominating conventions were subject to Federal regulation the same as general elections.

There was no disagreement over the constitutional right of Congress to legislate against corruption in primaries but the court split 4 to 3 on the question whether Congress actually had done so in a broad 1870 statute making it a crime to deprive a citizen of his constitutional rights.

The majority opinion, by Justice Stone, held that law covered the case of five New Orleans election officials accused of altering 97 ballots in last September's Democratic congressional primary in favor of Representative T. Hale Boggs. The minority contended otherwise.

The specific purpose of the 1870 act was to carry out the 14th amendment giving the negroes the right to vote. While no question of negro suffrage was involved in the case decided today, Justice Department officials expressed belief that the decision indicated the court would "rule that any interference with the rights of negroes to vote in a primary to determine candidates for Federal office violated the Federal statute."

They expressed belief the court would hold the 1870 law applicable to any political party regulations which bar negro voters from primaries or which require tests of party regularity.

Justice Douglas in the minority opinion contended that direct primaries were unknown when the act in question was passed, that Congress "through the years" and specifically in connection with the Hatch Act in 1939 had refused to enter the field of primaries and that "this court is legislating when it takes the initiative in extending (the 1870 law) to primaries."

MAY 27 1941

Justices Black and Murphy joined Douglas in the dissent. Chief Justice Hughes did not participate, presumably because, while practicing law in 1921, he represented Senator Truman H. Newberry of Michigan in a case where the court held that Congress could not regulate primary campaign expenditures. One seat on the bench is vacant.

MAY 27 1941

Justices Black, Douglas and Murphy also were dissenters in two other cases involving constitutional points as the court disposed of about half of the score of cases remaining on its docket before its Summer recess after next Monday.

Some pungent comment by Justice Frankfurter on the rights and duties of administrative officers brightened an opinion upholding a 1939 order by Vice-President Wallace as secretary of agriculture reducing the maximum fees for commission agents at the Kansas City Stockyards between 1933 and 1937.

The commission men argued that Wallace should disqualify himself as biased because of a letter he wrote to The New York Times protesting an earlier decision which upset his order.

"In publicly criticizing this court's opinion," Frankfurter observed, "the secretary merely indulged in a practice familiar in the long history of Anglo-American litigation whereby unsuccessful litigants and lawyers give vent to their disappointment in tavern or press. Cabinet officers charged by Congress with adjudicatory functions are not assumed to be flabby creatures any more than judges are."

Frankfurter also held that Wallace should not have been questioned regarding the manner of reaching his findings.

MAY 27 1941

### A. S. C. A. P. Is Defeated

**In Florida and Nebraska cases involving the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (A. S. C. A. P.), the court upheld the right of States to regulate "combinations in restraint of trade." The two States have enacted laws permitting the public performance of copyright music whenever the original purchase price is paid but the court did not rule on the legality of the laws as a whole. The opinion, by Justice Black, was confined to the restraint phase.**

The court also reversed the murder conviction of Joe Vernon, Birmingham, Ala., negro who charged that he was subjected to a "third degree" and that negroes were excluded from his jury, and denied a petition by Illinois to increase its diversion of water from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system. Such diversion had been fought by Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan and New York. Many opinions were delivered in these two cases.

MAY 27 1941

The Supreme Court also held today that the United States is entitled to a decree setting aside tax sales by Alabama of property claimed by the United States. The decision was unanimous.

The opinion, by Chief Justice Hughes, added that liens claimed by Alabama should be held valid.

The decision applied specifically to three tracts of land in Macon County. The Justice Department said the ruling affected, however, other States it did not identify where the Federal Government had made extensive purchases of land pursuant to various relief programs.

The dispute involved whether Alabama could enforce on land claimed by the United States a lien to guarantee real estate taxes, when the amount of the taxes had not been determined when the land passed to the Federal Government.

Times-Picayune
New Orleans, La.

MAY 27 1941

## Congress' Power to Regulate Primary Elections Involving U. S. Posts Upheld by High Tribunal

Under a ruling Monday by the United States supreme court that Congress has the power to regulate primary elections involving federal offices, five commissioners who served here in the September 10 congressional primary stand to face trial on charges of violating civil rights statutes.

The high court reversed a ruling of the federal district court here which dismissed four counts of an indictment against the commissioners after defense counsel filed a demurrer holding that the federal government had no jurisdiction in applying civil rights statutes in state primaries.

MAY 27 1941

United States Attorney Rene A. Viosca, who took an appeal to the United States supreme court, said Monday's ruling meant the federal government had the right to intervene in any state election involving federal offices in which civil rights statutes were violated.

### Original Indictment Upheld

"The supreme court's action upholds the original indictment," Mr. Viosca said. "As soon as its decision is final our next step will be to have the case set for trial. Of course, defense attorneys have the right to apply to the supreme court for a rehearing."

Warren O. Coleman, who with Charles Kehl acted as defense counsel for the five commissioners, said 25 days are allowed in which to apply for a rehearing and that he will study the entire text of the decision before taking further action in the matter.

Mr. Viosca pointed out that the case was unusual in that it was appealed before the men were brought to trial. Right of the federal government to intervene in such cases has been disputed since 1921 when a split decision was returned by the United States supreme court in the Newbury case.

Patrick B. Classic, John A. Morris, Bernard W. Yeager, Jr., William Schumacher and J. J. Fledderman, all commissioners in Precinct Two of Ward 11, were indicted September 25.

MAY 27 1941

### Six Counts in Charge

The indictment contained six counts, four of which charged violation of civil rights and two use of the mails to defraud. The two fraud counts are still pending in federal district court here.

The indictment, in the first four counts, charged that by erasing and remarking ballots cast for certain candidates and counting them for another candidate rights of citizens and candidates both were violated in that they had the right to have the votes counted accurately.

The indictment alleged that the count gave T. Hale Boggs 526 votes, Paul H. Maloney, then incumbent, eight votes and Joseph Young three votes, whereas the "true" vote was 426 for Boggs, 94 for Maloney and 17 for Young.

The demurrer claiming no jurisdiction was sustained by Judge Adrien J. Caillouet on October 9.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# NEGROES URGED TO REGISTER BY VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

JAN 18 1941

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 16—Negroes of New Orleans have been urged to register by the Republican and Democratic Negro organizations of the city.

A new registration is necessary for all citizens of Louisiana and the Negroes have been urged to go to the registrar's office and register. They have also been advised to let the organizations know if their registration has been refused. It is thought by this that another attempt will be undertaken to have the registration laws declared unconstitutional. These laws have been admittedly passed for the purpose of prohibiting Negroes from registering. They are stressing the fact that a poll tax receipt is not necessary for registration.

Constitution
Atlanta, Georgia

# Court Asked To Reconsider Primary Rule

## Discrimination in Favor of Democrats Is Charged.

JUN 15 1941

WASHINGTON, June 14.—(AP)—A petition seeking reconsideration of a May 26 decision holding that the federal government had power to regulate primaries nominating a member of congress was filed with the supreme court today.

A rehearing was sought by counsel for five New Orleans election commissioners who were charged with changing votes cast in a primary last September 10 to select a Democratic nominee for the house.

Referring to Justice Department contentions that in the south nomination in a primary was equivalent to election and hence should be included within federal control of elections, the petition said:

"The statute (under which the men were indicted) as interpreted by this court would arbitrarily discriminate in favor of the Democratic party in the south which usually wins, and afford no protection to the Republican party in the south which seldom ever wins."

The court erred, the petition added, "in holding that the election conducted by the Democratic party for the selection of candidates to run in the general election was a step in the election, as this ignores the fundamental concept of a political party and its functions and its nominating process."

No action can be taken on the petition until next October, since the court now is in recess.

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

# *Court to Decide if Congress Can Regulate Primaries*

APR 8 - 1941

The Supreme Court took under advisement yesterday the question whether Congress can regulate primaries especially in the South where nomination frequently is equivalent to election.

Herbert Wechsler special assistant to the Attorney General argued that it could but this was disputed by Warren O. Coleman attorney for five New Orleans election commissioners charged with changing votes cast in a Democratic Congressional primary. The litigation is of potential far-reaching importance.

"If Congress has this power" Coleman asserted "it has the power to abolish all primary elections for Senators and Representatives in every State in the Union. It has the power to establish conventions to overthrow conventions to provide any sort of a primary that it may desire."

The indictment was dismissed by the Eastern Louisiana Federal District Court on the ground that the Supreme Court had held that Congress had no authority to regulate primaries but only general elections.

APR 8 - 1941

This 1921 decision ruled that Congress would not regulate expenditures by Senator Truman Newberry, of Michigan, in his campaign for nomination. Chief Justice Hughes, then a practicing attorney, represented Newberry.

Wechsler said that "under the laws of Louisiana the primary is a part of the election machinery of the State" and "is not only an integral part of the process of choice" but "is the determinative part."

APR 8 - 1941

"If a State prefers to conduct Congressional elections in two steps rather than in one," he added, "the protection of the Constitution reaches to both. Where, as in Louisiana, the first step is not only important, but is actually decisive, the Constitutional guarantee necessarily applies."

Coleman asserted that "a nomination is not an election for Senator or Representative" but "is merely the selection of the candidate by the party to be supported at the ensuing general election."

"The Constitution," he continued, "gives to Congress no power to regulate the process of nomination"

APR 8 - 1941

Coleman said that the "Louisiana dictotorship was overthrown last year" and that the State Legislature had passed an act to restore to the political parties "complete control of the operation and administration of the parties."

"The only idea of the legislators in passing the act," he said, "was to take control of elections away from State officials so they could not control or dominate them."

Times-Picayune
New Orleans, La.

# *Supreme Court Considers Authority of Congress to Regulate State Primaries*

## Question of Supervision Is Linked to Orleans Case Appeal in Conviction on Ballot Irregularities

(The Associated Press)

Washington, April 7.—The supreme court took under advisement today the question whether Congress can regulate primaries, especially in the South, where nomination frequently is equivalent to election.

Herbert Wechsler, special assistant to the attorney general, argued that it would but this was disputed by Warren O. Coleman, attorney for five New Orleans election commissioners charged with changing votes cast in a Democratic congressional primary.

APR 8 1941

"If Congress has this power," Coleman asserted, "it has the power to abolish all primary elections for senators and representatives in every state in the Union. It has the power to establish conventions, to overthrow conventions, to provide any sort of a primary that it may desire."

The indictment was dismissed by the Eastern Louisiana federal district court on the ground that the supreme court had held that Congress had no authority to regulate primaries, but only general elections. This 1921 decision ruled that Congress would not regulate expenditures by Senator Truman Newbery of Michigan in his campaign for nomination. Chief Justice Hughes, then a practicing attorney, represented Newbery.

Wechsler said that "under the laws of Louisiana the primary is a part of the election machinery of the state" and "is not only an integral part of the process of choice" but "is the determinative part."

APR 8 1941

"If a state prefers to conduct congressional elections in two steps rather than in one," he added, "the protection of the constitution reaches to both."

Coleman asserted that "a nomination is not an election for senator or representative" but "is merely the selection of the candidate by the party to be supported at the ensuing general election."

"The constitution," he continued, "gives to Congress no power to regulate the process of nomination."

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# LA. ELECTION BAN DEPRIVES VOTERS OF LEGAL RIGHTS

APR 19 1941

APR 19 1941

WASHINGTON, Apr. 17—The white primary system of the South, which effectively disfranchises colored citizens in the one-party states, was attacked by the Federal Government in a criminal case in the Supreme Court last Monday.

Herbert Wechsler, a special assistant to the Attorney General, posed the question whether the right of a qualified voter to vote in the Louisiana primary election and to have his vote counted as cast by the commissioners of election is not a right secured or protected by the Constitution of the United States.

He argued that in Louisiana the Democratic primary is not only an integral part of the election process, but it is the determinative part.

APR 19 1941

**DEPRIVED OF VOICE IN ELECTIONS**

He pointed out that one of the major reasons for the development of the primary elections was that in the South, where nomination by the dominant party meant election, it is obvious that the will of the electorate would not be expressed at all unless it was expressed at the primary.

"Interference with the right to vote in the primary," he said, "deprives the voter of an opportunity to express a choice at the only stage in the process when the expression is of genuine signifiance."

**COURT STUDIES CASE**

His contentions were denied by Warren O. Coleman, attorney for five New Orleans election commissioners charged with changing votes cast in a Democratic Congressional primary.

The indictment against the election commissioners was dismissed by the Eastern Louisiana Federal District Court on the ground that the Supreme Court had held that Congress had no authority to regulate primaries but only general elections.

APR 19 1941

'If a state prefers to conduct Congressional elections in two steps rather than in one," Wechler said, "the protection of the constitution reaches to both. Where, as in Louisiana, the first step is not only important, but is actually decisive, the constitutional guarantee necessarily applies."

The court took the case under advisement.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

# --An Editorial--

FEB 28 1941

Thanks to the state supreme court, Missouri becomes once more a commonwealth where the people elect the officials. The attempt to make the legislature the master of the governorship has been rebuked by the judges acting unanimously. When this alleged contest was started, this paper said Missouri should be warned by the turmoil in other states against wha was being attempted. The way sentiment has crystal lized supported our view.

One point brought out by the decision is worth further comment. When asked what next, the very men in the legislature who refused to seat the prima facie winner, said of course they would obey the supreme court and proceed to declare Forrest C. Donnell governor. Good for them! That's the spirit!

Now let the legislature also obey the order of the United States supreme court, a higher tribunal than the state court, which has declared it to be the duty of Missouri to provide equal education for Negroes. So far it, like the legislature of two years ago, has shown no disposition to provide the equal education ordered. It moves, only under compulsion, and then step by step! This chapter in Missouri law-making is as shameful as was the attempt to choose the governor in the legislature.

Argus
St. Louis, Missouri

SEP 1 1939

## ALDERMEN BY WARDS

There is quite a stir among the people of the city of St. Louis over the question of adopting the merit system at the polls next Tuesday, September sixteenth.

We have observed with a deal of interest the part which Mayor William Dee Becker is playing in regard to supporting this amendment to the city charter. But strange to say, he has to date said little or nothing about the question of electing aldermen by wards. We would not mention this but for the fact that one of Mayor Becker's campaign promises was that he favored and would support the charter amendment calling for the election of aldermen by wards. We are thinking of a meeting which was held at the Castle Hall just before the election last spring when, according to newspaper reports, there were more than eighteen hundred Negroes present when the mayor reiterated his promise to support the election of aldermen by wards and said "such an election will automatically give the Negroes two aldermen and maybe four". That statement elicited wild and prolonged applause from his Negro audience. We are also thinking about a banquet which was given at the Pine Street Y.M.C.A. by the Interdenominational Ministers' Alliance. At this banquet Mayor William Dee Becker reaffirmed his support of the election of aldermen by wards, saying that his election would mean more to the Negroes of St. Louis than the election of the then Negro candidate who was running for alderman on the Democratic ticket, because the election of aldermen by wards would assure two or maybe four Negro aldermen. These are facts and promises of Mayor William Dee Becker in his pre-election campaign. Has the Mayor so quickly forgotten those promises he made in his effort to win the Negro vote? However, based upon this promise we here and now call upon Mayor Becker to keep faith with these voters by throwing the strength of his good office in support of the charter amendment to elect aldermen by wards and for the merit system.

Charlotte, N. C. Observer
February 13, 1941

Representatives of th Colored Voters Alliance said tha since the city attorney, at request of the council, was to ask the General Assembly to authorize a bond election for the purpose of raising funds for building a large uptown auditorium, that the voters also be allowed to decide the advisability of an auditorium and gymnasium for the Negro population.

**The council failed to take action on this request. Then the Negroes wanted to know if there was anything in the city charter to prevent Negroes from taking the civil service examinations in order to qualify to fill vacancies in the police department.**

City Attorney Scarborough explained that the charter was not discriminatory and that Negroes could compete. He added, however, that the vacancies are filled by the civil service commission and not by the council.

---

A rather lengthy report on the affairs of the Park and Recreation commission was presented the council by Marvin Ray, superintendent.

He said $2,164 was spent last summer for recreation leaders and playground equipment from June 7 to August 28. The programs were carried out at a cost of about one cent per child per play period.

"If it isn't worth one penny for a child to have a safe place to play in a morning or afternoon under supervision and care, then we assume that children aren't worth very much," Mr. Ray said.

"We have," he said, about nine acres usable at Latta Park, three at Bryant, approximately 12 at Independence, three at Morgan, two at Cordelia and two at Colonial. A total of 31 acres more or less for 100,000 population, or approximately one acre to each 3,000 people. This seems to be our greatest need for the present and future: places where every one in the city—young and old—may have an opportunity to participate in some form of physical recreation. After such spaces are acquired and equipped, they should be lighted, fenced and protected."

He went on to say that "we have a total of three acres owned by the commission and usable for the Negro population, which is approximately one acre to 10,000 population—which was acquired by gift and the only such gift made for the Negro population. This gives the Negro people an idea that the park commission discriminated against them. But this is not the case. Every space belonging to this commission has been donated by individuals under such conditions that funds appropriated for park and recreation purposes were necessarily spent to retain such gifts."

"The western half of the city, from Tryon street over, or even from the railroad to the west side, the white and Negro are both almost unanimously opposed to any appropriations for Park and Recreation purposes—as was exemplified in the 1939 election. A glance at the city map showing locations of parks and playgrounds available to those people might reveal adequate cause for their attitude. Bryant and Revolution parks are on the west side of Tryon, but the former is not surrounded by many residents and more than half of the latter is outside the city limits. Fairview park is also on that side, but in such condition that no activities are available since the pool was condemned.

"Although that portion of the city seems to have been neglected for the same reason the Negroes feel that they are neglected, there are other sections equally—if not more—in need of space for recreation. The densely populated areas of First and Second Wards are due primary consideration, although, beginning this late in the development of such a community, adequate space will be hard to find. There are still two possibilities in Second Ward.

"There is a great difference in cities which were planned and cities which grew up at random. Planned ciies have their speaces designated so that they have a pretty good idea what to expect in the future. Their business district, residential section, this space for schools, and that for parks. Charlotte has grown so rapidly and so much, without any thought of public recreation and without any expenditure for that purpose, that we are afraid to estimate the costs of such grounds, equipment, etc., that would put us on an equal basis with the average American city of our size. This statement may sound foolish to some people, but while we have been spending barely enough to maintain (in a manner) what has been given us, others have been going ahead with permanent improvements for 15 to 25 years, and there is no evidence that they have had too much.

"For example, suppose we had spent nothing for streets except what was absolutely necessary for maintenance. Where would we be? How much would it cost to catch up with where we eare now? The figures would probably cause some of the city fathers and taxpayers to faint. We are in that fix—except on a smaller scale.

"The Park and Recreation problem has such complexities that every individual in the city must feel it his responsibility as a citizen to provide those things which are essential to the normal and healthy growth of our children and the American Way of Life. If this is to remain a free country, then it is the responsibility of every community to provide, maintain and protect such space and equipment that may be necessary for its populace to express themselves freely, and recreate their minds and bodies. There is a greater necessity for this now than there hav ever been before. How are we going to get all of these things? Whose responsibility is it? It is the responsibility of us living in the City of Charlotte and nobody else. Those things cannot be secured by squabbling over or for a little portion of the little bit that is available, and will only be accomplished by having every one work together, white and black, for one purpose."

Councilman John Ward informed the council that the Federal Communication commission has given the city several warnings that its radio equipment did not meet specifications. He suggested that sufficient money be appropriated to correct the situation. The council approved and $500 was appropriated for the purchase of necessary equipment.

Raleigh, N. C., News & Observer
March 15, 1941

## NEGRO GROUP PRAISES ELECTIONS BOARD MOVE

The Negro Citizen's Committee of Raleigh went on record at its monthly meeting recently as approving the decision of the Wake County board of elections to appoint Negro registrars and precinct judges for precincts Nos. 10 and 16.

The committee expressed appreciation for the action and pledged its whole-hearted support to the board in its effort to encourage clean political activtiy.

Henderson, N. C. Dispatch
April 7, 1941

Raleigh last week la nched an experiment that is beir g watched by other cities with predominant Negro voting precincts. Two of Raleigh's precincts have newly appointed Negro registrars and election judges for the forthcoming city primary and election. The Negroes were named by he Wake county elections board for he precincts where the Negro vote so largely controls. Their appointment brought immediate and violent protest from the several hundred white voters resident in those precincts, and as a partial concession the county board named assistant white registrars. Not since Fusion days has Raleigh had Negro election officials, and so far as local politicians know no other city or county in North Carolina has had Negro officials within the past forty years. The experiment is being watched with keen interest. Actual effect so far has been to slow down tremendously the registration in these precincts, many of the Negroes even not liking the idea of Negro registrars.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

## Urge Probe of North Carolina Vote Requirement

MAY 9 - 1941

ASHEVILLE, N. C. — As bad as the old "grandfather" clause is the practice employed by election officials here to prevent Negroes from registering to vote.

To United States Attorney General Robert H. Jackson, Thurs[day] April 28, went affidavits sh[owing] that S. I. Thomas, Rev. M. Eickleberger and W. R. Saxon, a of this city, were denied the privilege of registering to vote in the last presidential election.

The affidavit states that the registration official demanded that the men read a long paragraph in three to five minutes, close the book, then write from memory what they had read, claiming that this procedure was a state law. The men testify that while they stood there a white man was able to register after answering only the questions of who he was and where he was from. No impossible feats of memory were required of him

The N.A.A.C.P. urged immediate investigation of the facts by the office of the attorney [illegible]

Asheville N. C. Citizen
May 8, 1941

# WERE REFUSED RIGHT TO VOTE, NEGROES CLAIM

## Affidavits Forwarded To Attorney-General Jackson

Three Asheville negroes have made affidavits that registrars refused to let them register for the November election, and these have been forwarded to the office of the attorney general of the United States, it was revealed yesterday.

They were obtained and sent in by the local unit of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which is headed by Lela B. Michael, a teacher in the Hill Street school.

She said last night that the actual work of getting up the papers was handled by W. R. Saxon, chairman of the redress committee of the association, and the dalay since the election was occasioned by the fact that there was some correspondence between the committee and the national office of the organization on how to proceed.

The three who made affidavits—W. R. Saxon, 51 Walton street; M. C. Eichelberger, 11 Atlanta street; and S. I. Thomas — state in their affidavits that registration officials demanded that they "read a long paragraph in three to five minutes, close the book, and then write from memory what they had read," claiming that the procedure was a state law.

It was charged in the papers forwarded to Attorney General Robert H. Jackson's office that negroes were forced to meet tests that were not required of white voters before they could register. This, the papers contended, was in violation of their constitutional rights.

Raleigh, N. C., News & Observer
April 22, 1941

## Negro Election Officials At Work

Negro officials presided over balloting in yesterday's primary in two predominantly Negro precincts, No. 10 and 16, for the first time at least since the turn of the century. Reuban D. Pattain is shown casting his vote on the porch of the Old Soldier's Home, polling place for No. 10 Precinct. Reading left to right are Voter Pattain, J. E. Strickland and E. J. Carnage, judges, and Roberta Mitchell, registrar.

North Wilkesboro, N. C. Hustler
July 2. 1941

## 75,000 Negroes Eligible To Vote

Leading Negro newspapers estimate that North Carolina now has approximately 75,000 eligible voters for elections. They also contend that is less than one-fourth of those who should be allowed to vote. The white people of North Carolina might as well forget some of their notions about their colored neighbors, for they are going to be forced to readjust themselves to meet new conditions. In the last election many negroes registered and voted—many voted for Roosevelt. In the draft registration they all registered and many have been called to the camps.

The Plaindealer
Kansas City, Kan

## Ask U. S. Probe Of Election Test In N. C.

MAY 9 - 1941

ASHEVILLE, N. C.—As bad as the old "Grandfather" clause is the practice employed by election officials here to prevent Negroes from registering to vote.

To United States Attorney General Robert H. Jackson ,Thursday, April 28, went affidavits showing that S. I. Thomas, Reverend M. C. Eichelberger and W. R. Saxon, all of this city, were denied the privilege of registering to vote in the last presidential election. MAY 9 - 1941

The affdavit states that the registration official demanded that the men read a long paragraph in three to five minutes, close the book, then write from memory what they had read, claiming that this procedure was a state law. Then men testified that while they stood there a white man was able to register after answering only the questions of who he was and where he was from. No impossible feats of memory were required of him.

Urging immediate investigation of facts by the office of the attorney general. the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People stated, "The fact that Negroes were required to meet tests not required of white citizens effectively denied to Negro Americans in Asheville, N. C., their constitution right and is a violation of the fourteenth and fifteenth amndments to the United States Constitution. MAY 9 - 1941

"We therefore urge an immediate investigation to the end that the guilty persons be prosecuted under the laws of the United States.

Raleigh, N. C., News & Observer
November 1, 1941

## End of Voting Blocs?

The vote on Tuesday by which the corporate limits of Raleigh were extended may have one by-product more significant than the result itself.

The result was much more decisive than is usual in Raleigh elections. The ratio for extension in the entire area of the new city was considerably larger than two to one and foes of extension carried only four of 18 precincts, those four being the three precincts with a large Negro vote and one of the three precincts containing a large percentage of the area formerly outside of the city.

There has been much talk in the past of Raleigh Negro voters holding a balance of power in city elections and there has been evidence to support the contention. Obviously, the balance of power could never be held by a group which casts only 15 per cent of the total vote in the absence of two conditions, cohesiveness on the part of the minority group and a sharp division among all the rest of the voters.

Both of those conditions were absent in Tuesday's voting and there is reason to believe that they will also be absent in the future. Instead of voting as a group, Negro voters divided on Tuesday in much the same way as white voters, although a majority of them voted against the extension. But even a 100 per cent. Negro vote against extension would not have affected the result or seriously reduced the majority.

It would be unfortunate if racial blocs of voters were succeeded by geographical blocs with suburban sections of the city combining against downtown areas. But there was little in the voting on Tuesday to indicate that anything of that nature will happen, as there was a majority for extension in two of the three precincts with a large percentage of outside voters.

If the election on Tuesday in fact marked the end of effective voting blocs in Raleigh, that result may prove more important for the future welfare of the city than extension itself.

Star of Zion
Charlotte, N. C.

## NAACP ASKS U. S. PROBE OF N. C. EDUCATION TEST FOR NEGRO VOTERS

Asheville, N. C.—As bad as the old "grandfather" clause is the practice employed by election officials here to preevnt Negroes from registering to vote.

To United States Attorney General Robert H. Jackson, Thursday, April 28, went affidavits showing that S. I. Thomas, Reverend M. C. Eickleberger and W. R. Saxon, all of this city, were denied the privilege of registering to vote in the last presidential election.

The affidavit states that the registration official demanded that the men read a long paragraph in three to five minutes, close the book, then write from memory what they had read, claiming that this procedure was a state law. The men testify that while they stood there a white man was able to register after answering only the questions of who he was and where he was from. No impossible feats of memory were required of him.

Urging immediate investigation of the facts by the office of the attorney general, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People stated, "The fact that Negroes were required to meet tests not required of white citizens effectively denied to Negro Americans in Asheville, N.C., their constitutional right and is a violation of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution.

"We therefore urge an immediate investigation to the end that the guilty persons be prosecuted under the laws of the United States."

Asheville N. C. Citizen
December 18, 1941

## NEGROES LIVE OR OWN PROPERTY IN ALL WARDS BUT 4

Negroes own property in or live in every ward in the city and the county with the exception of four, figures released yesterday at the tax assessor's office showed. These are ward 9 in the city and Avery's Creek, Upper Hominy and Sandy Mush wards in the county.

Poll tax figures show 11,636 white persons and 319 negroes registered. Other figures released were:

Acres owned (those listed as acreage): white 308,850, negro 1,356; value: white $10,853,402, negro $53,915; lots owned: white 49,753, negro 1,779; value: white $60,782,929. negro $1,373,814; total value real estate owned: white $71,636,331, negro $1,427,729; total personal property owned: white $13,421,511, negro $68,682; grand total: white $85,057, 842, negro $1,496,411.

These figures do not include public service corporations such as railroads, power companies, and telephone companies. Valuations on these have not been received from the state corporation commission.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# Four Cleveland Candidates Carry Anti-Nazi Banner

SEP 28 1941

(Special to the Sunday Worker)

CLEVELAND, O., Sept. 27.—Talk to the average candidate for City Council here in Tuesday's run-off primaries and you'll find that he's against Hitler. But you'll also find that this is merely a sentiment and not a principle of action.

Neither in his program nor speeches is there any clear-cut idea of how the office he aspires to can be made a rallying center for Hitler's defeat. The routine of ward politics served him before; in the midst of a world crisis, he hopes they will serve him now, leaving to others the task of giving to the people that anti-Hitler leadership they eagerly await.

SEP 28 1941

This political poverty and timidity places in shining contrast three candidacies in widely separated wards, of three men who rise above the common level by elevating above all other issues the common task of defending America by beating Hitler now.

Anthony Krchmarek in Ward 30, Cleveland's largest; Bernard McGroarty in Ward 32, second largest subdivision in the city; and Frank A. Smik, Jr. in Ward 7, all say, each in his own particular way, "Defeat Hitler and Defend Democracy before everything else."

Their common devotion to the cause of Hitler's defeat is no accident. All three candidates are workers. All three have learned in the hard school of struggle that there can be no compromise with the enemy of the people, that indifferenec and half-heartedness and refusal of personal responsibility are invitations to disaster.

Both Krchmarsk and McGroarty began life in and around the coal mines of Pennsylvania. Krchmarek's father was a miner and left the mine country only after a serious explosion.

Krchmarek has successively worked as a machinist in Packard, Cadillac and other Detroit auto factories, as meat-cutter, as manager of a cooperative store, and is now State President of the International Workers Order. Smik, younger than the other two, is nevertheless a veteran painter now on a two week leave of absence from his scaffold in order to put final touches on his campaign.

All three are ardent unionists, with strong trade-union support. Before becoming an IWO official, Krchmarek was a member of the AFL Meat Cutters Union, and has the personal endorsement of such trade-union leaders as A. E. Stevenson, Secretary of the Cleveland CIO Industrial Council, and of Courtney Ward, Secretary of the AFL Painters District Council. He is bound to roll up an impressive vote, experienced ward politicians say.

McGroarty, in Ward 32, was for 12 years president of Local 22 of the Stereotypers Union, and is now a special representative of the Stereotypers International. He is no novice at electioneering. He previously polled a large vote for Council in 1939, and in 1938 was one of Labor's Non-Partisan League top banner-bearers as a candidate for State Senator.

Smik, in Ward 7, has been endorsed by his local, 765, AFL Painters, by a long list of CIO officials and also by the Cuyahoga County Slovak Democratic League.

In the Mayoralty run-off there are five candidates running for Mayor. But one name will stand out above the rest as a champion of the struggle against Hitler and Hitlerism.

SEP 28 1941

That name is Arnold Johnson. It's no new name to Clevelanders. They have heard it repeatedly through years of unemployed struggle, when Johnson was leading the Workers' Alliance of Ohio.

They have heard it, too, in past campaigns of Labor's Non-Partisan League, of which Johnson was an official. More recently they have heard it as the name of the State Secretary of the Ohio Communist Party.

Among political observers there is no question but that Johnson's campaign has contributed largely to stiffening the anti-Hitler attitudes of other candidates, and has helped crystallize popular resentment against the appeasement candidacy of Congressman Martin Sweeney, against whom Johnson has directed a withering fire.

On purely municipal issues, Johnson has attracted special attention by his proposal for public ownership of the city transportation system with a guarantee of 5-cent city fares and 7-cent suburban fares, with a universal transfer and extension of the present downtown 3-cent fare to serve wider areas of the business section.

A broad program of other measures in behalf of the Negro people includes the establishment of a special Negro Commission by the city to improve Negro health and housing, to lower rents, create jobs, broaden educational and recreational facilities, and establish full political rights for the Negro people.

SEP 28 1941

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla

# Many Oklahoma Governors Have Integrity

JUL 12 1941

With the 1942 gubernatorial campaign looming just around the corner, Negroes over Oklahoma are a little pessimistic. They argue that the "worst ever" administration, now entering its closing laps, has proved promises made during election campaigns are too easily forgotten or broken.

These disappointed politicians point out that Leon C. Phillips while a candidate for governor promised Negroes everything asked for, and violated all of his promises. "Why go to the trouble to get a man on the dotted line when you know he is going to disregard everything he tells Negroes?" ask the disconsolate.

In this connection it is pointed out that Phillips in a signed statement, published in the Black Dispatch, promised to separate the three state institutions at Taft; to appoint a medical superintendent for the hospital for Negro insane, and announced a seven-point program for Negroes, all of which has either been junked or violated.

The Black Dispatch wants to point out that the failure of the Phillips administration to fulfill pledges made to Negroes is not sufficient to warrant Negroes in belief that candidates for office will not make promises having integrity and sincerity.

Let us look at the state record. It should be recalled, Jack Walton, while mayor of Oklahoma City and later as governor, made promises to Negroes all of which he fulfilled to the letter. That is the reason why Negroes in Oklahoma today, in spite of the fact they know Walton belongs in the "has-been" column, will go to the polls by the thousands to vote for "Jack," as he is endearingly referred to.

Walton, it should be recalled, while running for office, made a promise to the late Dr. I. W. Young. Walton told Young while a candidate, that he would give him any position he asked for in Negro institutions of the state. Walton later is quoted as saying, "I didn't know the .... would ask for the presidency of Langston university, but I remembered my promise and gave it to him."

And then Walton took a stand against mob violence and the order of the Ku Klux Klan. He told Negroes of Oklahoma City what he would do regarding the mob and the Klan. The entire United States of America knows that Walton kept his word to Negroes regarding the mob and the Klan, even though he was driven from the capitol building while carrying out his promise.

The Negro policemen who ride in scout cars in Oklahoma City result from the integrity of Jack Walton. When Mr. Walton first presented himself for office he ran under the old charter form for commissioner of public works. At that time this writer was a Republican, but we had announced our opposition to Guy Blackwelder, Republican incumbent. Blackwelder had voted for Oklahoma City's first race segregation ordinance, and it was because of this that the Black Dispatch opposed him.

When Jack Walton came to our office, in the basement at Second and Central, we made a trade with him early one morning. The deal was that in return for our support he was to employ more Negroes in the public works department than Blackwelder, and that in addition, Walton was to go on the council and fight for a policy in the police department requiring the employment of Negro policemen. Under the old charter form the police department was under the control of the mayor, who at that time happened to be the late Ed Overholser. Overholser had declared that so long as he had anything to do with the police department Negroes would never hold such positions.

Jack Walton was elected. The Negro vote gave him his majority, and true to his word, Walton placed more Negroes on public works than ever before. He went into the council and started a hubbub regarding Negro policemen, and just a few months later, when a change came and he was elected mayor, his first major political move was to name two Negroes as policemen. It is because we have had pleasant experiences in seeing white men keep their promises that we do not have patience with those who go hay-wire when some white man violates an agreement. There are just as many Negroes who will not keep their promise as there are white.

JUL 12 1941

And then along came "Alfalfa Bill" Murray. Murray does not have high opinion of Negroes, but he does have high regard for his word. Murray, while announcing that Negroes could never rise higher than porters and bootblacks, announced also that none of the porters and bootblacks in Oklahoma would be lynched while he was in office. All who know the record realize that Bill Murray went out of his way several times while governor to let the mob know there would be no monkey business, or a Roman holiday while he sat in the governor's chair. The 200,000 Negroes of this state know Bill Murray jammed the brakes in every local community where the lyncher loomed during his administration.

And then Bill Murray said he was going to build a hospital for Negro insane. Of course the governor built the hospital, which is a credit to this state, but he also put a white man in charge, in keeping with the governor's notions regarding the inferiority of black folk. The point we wish to make is there are many white folk in Oklahoma whose record in public office prove a promise made will be translated into performance.

When E. W. Marland came on the scene he was practically unknown to Negroes, and because of this had practically no Negro support in his candidacy for governor. J. W. Sanford and a few of his friends from Southern Oklahoma went to Marland and secured from him perhaps the most significant promise ever extracted from an Oklahoma governor.

Sanford wanted to be president of Langston university. He knew what had been hampering the institution for years, so in making his deal with Governor Marland he extracted the promise that if elected, Governor Marland would take the school completely out of politics and let the president of the institution run Langston university. Up to the Sanford administration Langston university for more than 20 years had been the dumping ground where state senators and state representatives unloaded all of the political senicures.

Everyone knowing anything about the Marland admin-

istration knows that in spite of violent pressure Sanford was allowed to run Langston university without let or hindrance. It was because of the sheltered atmosphere in which he reigned that President Sanford incurred the enmity of State Senator Louis Ritzhaupt. Sanford selected his own faculty and ran his own school. This editorial is not intended for laudation of J. W. Sanford. What we have in mind here is to prove that in the political records of Oklahoma can be found a time when governors made promises to Negroes which they faithfully kept. Whether President Sanford did or did not make the most of the opportunities given him by the governor is not at issue. That can be discussed another time.

There is too much to be done in Oklahoma regarding the civil rights of Negroes for pessimistic leadership to step out in front saying nothing can be done, or will be done regarding emolument and privilege of black citizens.

If we are to be plunged into the vortex of war, gubernatorial candidates should be quizzed regarding the right of Negroes to sit on draft boards in the state and on the policy making boards having to do with national defense. Are Negroes going to sit supinely by announcing nothing can be done, when something should and can be accomplished?

JUL 1 2941

Our state institutions need revamping and in the field of relief there is much that should be discussed by Negroes with the various units of government.

If this is an actual democracy, Negroes should be in the Oklahoma national guard, Jim Crow should be abolished and every field of employment should be opened to black workers. No one who thinks Negroes should go off somewhere and sit down; no one who believes protests should not be made, should have the ear of black folk.

It was Ella Wheeler Wilcox who said:

"The human race has climbed on protest."

Kick a cur dog and he elicits sympathy while howling under the house. This is no time for a let-up or a truce in the fight for ideal government. If the government has integrity in the fight for democracy, let us say to government what Christ said to his apostles when asked where to begin preaching. Christ said, "Begin at Jerusalem, right where you are."

JUL 12 1941

It is the black man here in America who more aptly than any other unit of the population can say to America, "start preaching and practicing democracy at home." The current gubernatorial race getting under way should find Negroes in Oklahoma on their tip-toes asking the candidates, "What are you going to do about democracy in Oklahoma?" "What are you going to do about civil rights for Negroes?" Let's get on the job now and in the language of that once popular ballad, "Don't you let nobody turn you 'round."

Tribune
Philadelphia, Pa.



# Jay Cooke's Successor Must Not Be Hostile To City's Negro Voters

JAN 25 1941

Jay Cooke's successor as Chairman of the City Republican Committee must be a man who is interested in the political, economical and industrial advancement of Philadelphia's thousands of Negro voters.

That is the contention of the Colored American Citizens Organization of Philadelphia County, of which Councilman James H. Irvin is president, and James B. Bannaker, chairman of the executive committee.

"The Citizens Organization will do everything in its power to help arouse members of the Negro race to defeat any candidate whose past record shows that he has been hostile or has shown discrimination against colored citizens," Bannaker said.

He also revealed that the Citizens Organization will sponsor a mass meeting for the purpose of discussing openly the eligibility and records of all candidates for the post.

The following Republican leaders have been mentioned for the chairmanship: David Harris, Recorder of Deeds; David Waston, Sheriff; Richard Weiglein, member of the Delaware River Bridge Commission; William Hamilton, Secretary of Revenue; Dr. John J. Shaw, Secretary of Health, and John T. Bell, a member of the State Banking Department.

Tribune
Philadelphia, Pa.

# Youth Council Holds Poll Tax Meeting At "Y"

## 200 Sign Resolution Urging Passage Of Geyer Bill

"To have democracy in this city we must have freedom of voting without interference on the part of police officials in Negro wards," declared Miss Goldie Ervin, of the National Negro Congress, in making her report to the NAACP Youth Council.

Miss Ervin spoke on jobs and pointed out the significance of the arrest of over 500 Negroes during the last election.

MAY 22 1941

Over 200 persons were present at the meeting called by the Youth Council on Saturday evening at the YWCA, 1605 Catharine street, at which time a resolution demanding the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill be brought out on the floor of the House was passed and signed by all present.

DIXIE CONDITIONS CITED

Edward Strong, of the Southern Youth Congress, told of the conditions and practices that are used against the youth in the deep South.

Others participating in the discussions were Fred Guilford, Catherine Hopkins, Clarissa Watson, Earl Vann, Ann Harrison, Carmen Olliverre and Phyllis Graham.

A letter was drafted and sent to the local Congressmen and Senators demanding that they oppose convoys and the sending of another American army to foreign shores.

MAY 22 1941

The need for better leadership in the church and the broadness of policies as effected through trade and mechanics Unions were discussed at the meeting.

Columbia, S. C. Record
May 27, 1941

# Decision May Place Negroes In Primaries

## Court's Ruling Studied In S. C. As It May Open Democratic Ranks

A question of considerable moment rose today in the minds of South Carolina political leaders and election officials.

It rises out of the new opinion of the United States supreme court holding that state primaries and nominating conventions were subject to federal regulation, the same as general elections, where nominations for federal offices are involved.

In this state, where there are only primaries of the Democratic party, Negroes do not participate, but if the federal government is to make rules and regulations for such primaries, it is forecast by some in South Carolina, it is conceivable that such rules would require the party to permit the participation in these primaries, where federal offices are involved, of Negroes.

### What Officials Say

Although no direct question of Negro suffrage was involved in the case out of which came the supreme court's opinion, officials of the justice department in Washington expressed the belief that the court "would rule that such interference with the rights of Negroes to vote in a primary to determine candidates for federal office violated the federal statute."

The case out of which this opinion sprung was one in which five New Orleans election officials had been accused of altering 97 ballots in last September's Democratic primary in favor of Rep. T. Hale Boggs.

The court held that a statute of 1870, making it a crime to deprive a citizen of his constitutional rights, was applicable to this case.

(It was by no means a unanimous opinion, being by 4 to 3. Justices Douglas, Black and Murphy constituted the minority. Chief Justice Hughes did not participate in the opinion and one seat on the court is now vacant.)

According to the Associated Press, the justice department officials expressed the belief that the court would hold the 1870 law applicable to any political party regulations which bar Negro voters from primaries or which require tests of party regularity.

### From Stone's Opinion

The opinion, written by Justice Stone, says "conspiracy to prevent the official count of a citizen's ballot is equally a conspiracy to injure and oppress the citizen when ballots are cast in a primary election prerequisite to the choice of party candidates for a congressional election . . . The right to participate, through the primary, in the choice of representatives in congress—a right, clearly secured by the constitution—is within the words of purposes of (the 1870 law) in the same manner and to the same extent as the right to vote at the general election."

Justice Douglas, in the opinion of the minority, contended that congress, "through th years," and specifically in connection with the Hatch act in 1939, had refused to enter the field of primaries and that "this court is legislating when it takes the initiative in extending (the 1870 law) to primaries."

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
June 3, 1941

## Primaries Are Not Necessaries

There is no reason for excitement in the South, in South Carolina, about the decision of the United States supreme court affirming the right of congress to control primary elections for congressmen, to supervise them or to interfere with them.

Nor would a decision of the supreme court denying the right of a party to exclude negroes from its primaries be cause of excitement or alarm.

Primary elections are not among the necessaries of life.

In the memory of elderly men, primaries for members of congress were not held in South Carolina, and George W. Dargan, John J. Hemphill, D. Wyatt Aiken, George D. Tillman, William Elliott, John H. Evins, Samuel Dibble, William H. Brawley were more than respectable figures in the national house of representatives.

Wade Hampton and M. C. Butler were not nominated for senator in primaries. Nor was B. R. Tillman in his first election, in 1894. Ten years, from 1876 to 1886, all the members of the house were nominated by conventions, and the first primary for a senatorship was in 1896. Some of the Congressmen were nominated by conventions until 1890.

South Carolina can return to the convention plan at pleasure. Exclusion of negroes from precinct clubs would not be exclusion from primaries. Surely a caucus of white men to make nominations would not be unlawful—unless the supreme court shall hold that no meeting of white men for any purpose is lawful. In some of the states now primaries are mere ratifications of caucus nominations.

To the convention plan are objections. There are objections to all plans. None is perfect. The processes of selections by conventions result in finding abler men for public service than the primaries produce.

In at least one important particular the convention plan is more democratic than primaries are. It is less expensive. The man of small means, the poor man, is at great disadvantage in primaries. The representative once in congress can spend $10,000, living two years on his salary for one year, on his reelection, and in South Carolina it is the exceptional citizen who can raise that sum to spend in a contest.

The supreme court's decision may be a flash in the pan. It can be thrown into the junk heap by the simple expedient of return to the convention plan.

Primaries are not necessaries of life. The notion that they are peculiarly "democratic," or Democratic, is nonsense and humbug.

There is and will be no danger of the negroes becoming a factor in the election of congressmen in the South as long as the white people of the South shall stick together.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# ELECTION OFFICIALS CASE GETS UNDERWAY

ANDERSON, S. C., May 29—Trial opened here Monday, May 26, in the Gaffney, S.C., election case which began in August, 1940, when election officials flatly refused to permit seven eligible Negro voters to register in the presidential primaries, and

New York Age
New York, N. Y

# S. C. ELECTION TRIAL OPENS

## Jury Once Again

ANDERSON, S. C.—Trial opened here Monday, May 26, in the Gaffney, S. C. election case which began in August 1940, when election officials flatly refused to permit seven eligible Negro voters to register in the presidential primaries and slammed the door in the face of three others.

According to the affidavit one of the election officials is said to have told the prospective voters, "Darkies ain't never registered in South Carolina and especially in Cherokee County. Unless the law is given, we will not register you."

The trial Monday is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation which was brought about by action by the N AACP.

A telegram was sent to the Department of Justice by Thurgood Marshall, NAACP special counsel, urging that the case be prosecuted by a representative of the Washington Office of the Department and not by a local official.

slammed the door in the face of three others.

According to the affidavit one of the election officials is said to have told the prospective voters, "D—s ain't never registered in South Carolina and especially in Cherokee county. Unless the law is given, we will not register you."

The trial Monday is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation which was brought about by action by the N.A.A.C.P.

A telegram was sent to the Department of Justice by Thurgood Marshall, N.A.A.C.P. special counsel, urging that the case be prosecuted by a representative of the Washington office of the department and not by a local official.

"Experience shows," Mr. Marshall stated, "that the only successful prosecutions in this type of case have been through representatives of the Washington office."

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Vote Barrier Case To Go To

## No Bill Voted By Grand Jury In First Session

ANDERSON, S. C.—(SNS)—The case of five Gaffney voters who were prevented from registering, still hangs fire as a result of the finding of no bill by the federal grand jury here.

District Attorney Oscar H. Doyle will submit the bill of indictment to the next federal grand jury.

An indictment was brought in the United States District Court against three members of the Cherokee county election board who refused to allow Mrs. M. M. Rink, Mrs. Lottie P. Haffney, Miss Bernice Bonner, Miss Lillian Bonner and Mrs. Eva Mae Dawkins to register in the 1940 presidential election, thus depriving them of their right to vote. The grand jury's finding means that jury members considered there was not sufficient evidence to support the charge or that the persons accused are not guilty.

Negro Labor News
Houston, Texas

## Charges Dropped In South Carolina Vote Barrier Case

ANDERSON, S. C.—(ANP)—Three members of the county registration board were cleared Saturday when the federal grand jury returned a no bill in the case which charged them with refusing five Negro registration certificates last fall, thus depriving them of their right to vote.

The district attorney who sought an indictment of the registration officials, has declared that he will again submit the bill to the next federal grand jury. Members of the board were charged with conspiracy to oppose persons in the exercises of their civil rights because of their refusal last fall in withholding registration certificates from five Negroes who made applications for them.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# REFUSED TO LET NEGROES REGISTER

ANDERSON, S. C., June 5. (ANP)—Three members of the county registration board were cleared Saturday when the federal grand jury returned a no bill in the case which charged them with refusing five Negroes registration certificates last fall, thus depriving them of their right to vote.

The district attorney who sought an indictment of the registration officials, has declared that he will again submit the bill to the next federal grand jury. Members of the board were charged with conspiracy to oppress persons in the exercises of their civil rights because of their refusal last fall to issue certificates to five Negroes who made applications for them.

An indictment was brought in the United States District court against three members of the Cherokee County election board who refused to allow Mrs. M. M. Rink, Mrs. Lottie P. Haffney, Miss Bernice Bonner, Miss Lillian Bonner and Mrs. Eva Mae Dawkins to register in the 1940 Presidential election. thus depriving them of

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
July 9, 1941

## Lost and Not Found

When a state senator, Mr. Edgar Brown of Barnwell county, tells South Carolinians that they should elect to the United States senate a man to succeed Mr. Byrnes "who has the courage and has the habit of standing on his own feet for what he thinks right for South Carolina, the nation and the white Democratic party," he should tell them what the "white Democratic party" is, where it is and how to find it.

Surely it is not in the White House, where colored folk are sometimes entertained at tea.

Surely it is not to be found at a banquet of pullman car porters at which a lady member of the president's household was a guest.

Surely it is not the Democratic party which Mr. James F. Byrnes said, in January, 1938, is now "controlled by the negroes."

The News and Courier and many of its readers and friends would like to be members of a national white Democratic party and wish that Senator Brown would lead them to it. If he cannot locate it, one of The News and Courier's want ads might serve.

In the city of Washington is not one man of prominence, not the president, not the members of the cabinet, not a senator or a representative in congress, who will dare to say that the Democratic party is "a white man's party."

Representative Bryson, for example, who is to be a candidate for senator, will not say it on the floor of congress.

The national Democratic party a "white man's party"? If that is so, the cameras lie when they take pictures in Harlem and Chicago's Second ward, and 3,000,000 negroes in Northern and Western states are told lies by the Democratic leaders.

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
August 21, 1941

## Mr. E. S. Blease Speaks Out

The state constitutional convention of 1895 was called with the main purpose of disqualifying a large number of negroes as voters. The negroes were then a considerable majority (women were not voting) of voters in South Carolina, about 30,000. The white voters would now outnumber the negroes by 130,000, roughly speaking, were all adults, white and black, voting.

The framers of the constitution, of whom the dominating one was Senator B. R. Tillman, deliberately made registration for voting and the act of voting difficult. The result, as Mr. Eugene S. Blease said in an address at Saluda last Saturday, was to "assure the complete return of white supremacy". No danger was present then of a return of "carpetbag rule", but there was present a danger of a split in the white party and appeal by two opposing factions in a general election to negro voters. Besides, one congressional district, the Seventh, was still sending negroes to congress from time to time. A negro, George Washington Murray, was the representative of the district when the convention was in session.

---

The difficulty of voting has been greatly reduced by the amendment of the constitution requiring only the presentation of poll tax receipts, instead of all tax receipts as formerly. Registration and voting are now easy for all persons, white and colored. Women pay no poll taxes, literacy of the white people is general, and probably 70 or 75 per cent of the negroes can read and write. If the number of negroes of voting age in the state be 390,000, it is probable that, with the laws impartially administered, 265,000 could now cast ballots in general elections.

---

The News and Courier holds that the laws should be impartially administered. Whatever excuse for discrimination against negroes by boards of registration and managers of elections existed in 1895, has disappeared Unlawful ways of reducing the negro vote the white people having come to be the large majority, now react to the weakening and injury of the white man's character. However necessary, and, in fact, praiseworthy, were the methods of the white people in 1876 and following years, there was lasting damage to the character of the white race from them, and recovery from it is not yet perfect.

---

There remains some danger of a split in the white man's South Carolina party, of two parties appealing to the negroes. That would be, in The News and Courier's opinion, disastrous. It can be avoided, provided the white South Carolinians have the needful character and common sense. The way is plain. They can retain the exclusive white primary for the election of state, county and municipal officers. Within this primary may be factions, equivalent to parties, as have been at more than one period since 1890, submitting to the results of the primary as final. Thus would come the benefits of the two party system in the general assembly, in all state and municipal administration, and in a democracy an "opposition" is essential to good government. The absence of organized factions the last twenty-four years has been the principal cause of the ever-increasing futility and incompetence of general assemblies.

---

The repeal in 1938 of the requirement that voters in primaries be bound to vote for the national Democratic candidates for president and vice president was a wise and a long step toward the release of white South Carolinians from political servitude. In 1940 the party authorities nullified this repeal in part by ruling that intending voters for Mr. Willkie could vote, but could not offer for office in Democratic primaries. It was, of course, a preposterous ruling, and the party "leaders" who made it will live to repent it.

---

When Mr. Blease said that the "Democratic party (national) is giving much encouragement—I hate to say it—to the negro vote", he spoke the plain and simple truth, as Mr. James F. Byrnes, when a senator, spoke it in more sweeping terms ("the negroes are now in control of the Democratic party") on the floor of the senate in 1938. Any candidate now before the people for United States senator in South Carolina speaking against the participation of negroes in politics is disloyal to the Franklin D. Roosevelt national party, however numbskulls may be deceived to the contrary. That candidate is trying to ride two horses in opposite directions.

In respect of the Roosevelt party's negro policy the other two candidates should be compelled to express themselves. The people should make them speak out. No man in a mask should be elected to the senate in the primary, September 2.

Mr. Eugene S. Blease's plain-speaking was public service.

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
September 17, 1941

## You Will See by the Returns

The attention of persons who shall read the returns of the primary election for United States senator, in progress as this is written, September 16, is respectively directed to these figures of the census of 1940:

Of 1,083,766 white persons in South Carolina 455,478 were under the age of twenty years and 628,178 were twenty years old or older.

Iun the group twenty to twenty-four years old were 103,450. Some of these were between twenty and twenty-one years old, had not arrived at twenty-one, the voting age. Estimating them at 28,178, the finding is that in South Carolina were 600,000 white persons of voting age last year. Seventeen months have passed since the census was taken.

Readers of the primary returns will see for themselves the proportion of the white population the successful candidate for United States senator will represent.

The number of negroes of voting age in the state is nearly 400,000. A popular thought is that negroes are not to be considered as creatures to be represented in government.

The proportion of 600,000 white adults of South Carolina who are represented as a result of the election is "food for thought."

Are the 400,000 white adults who did not vote represented by the successful candidate while the 400,000 negroes who did not vote are not?

Figure it out for yourselves, Ladies and Gentlemen."

What is a mandate from "the people"?

The important point is, "Who's got the coon skin and gone?", as Captain Tillman used to say.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# REFUSED TO LET NEGROES REGISTER

ANDERSON, S. C., June 5. (ANP)—Three members of the county registration board were cleared Saturday when the federal grand jury returned a no bill in the case which charged them with refusing five Negroes registration certificates last fall, thus depriving them of their right to vote.

The district attorney who sought an indictment of the registration officials, has declared that he will again submit the bill to the next federal grand jury. Members of the board were charged with conspiracy to oppress persons in the exercises of their civil rights because of their refusal last fall to issue certificates to five Negroes who made applications for them.

An indictment was brought in the United States District court against three members of the Cherokee County election board who refused to allow Mrs. M. M. Rink, Mrs. Lottie P. Haffney, Miss Bernice Bonner, Miss Lillian Bonner and Mrs. Eva Mae Dawkins to register in the 1940 Presidential election. thus depriving them of

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
July 9, 1941

## Lost and Not Found

When a state senator, Mr. Edgar Brown of Barnwell county, tells South Carolinians that they should elect to the United States senate a man to succeed Mr. Byrnes "who has the courage and has the habit of standing on his own feet for what he thinks right for South Carolina, the nation and the white Democratic party," he should tell them what the "white Democratic party" is, where it is and how to find it.

Surely it is not in the White House, where colored folk are sometimes entertained at tea.

Surely it is not to be found at a banquet of pullman car porters at which a lady member of the president's household was a guest.

Surely it is not the Democratic party which Mr. James F. Byrnes said, in January, 1938, is now "controlled by the negroes."

The News and Courier and many of its readers and friends would like to be members of a national white Democratic party and wish that Senator Brown would lead them to it. If he cannot locate it, one of The News and Courier's want ads might serve.

In the city of Washington is not one man of prominence, not the president, not the members of the cabinet, not a senator or a representative in congress, who will dare to say that the Democratic party is "a white man's party."

Representative Bryson, for example, who is to be a candidate for senator, will not say it on the floor of congress.

The national Democratic party a "white man's party"? If that is so, the cameras lie when they take pictures in Harlem and Chicago's Second ward, and 3,000,000 negroes in Northern and Western states are told lies by the Democratic leaders.

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
August 21, 1941

## Mr. E. S. Blease Speaks Out

The state constitutional convention of 1895 was called with the main purpose of disqualifying a large number of negroes as voters. The negroes were then a considerable majority (women were not voting) of voters in South Carolina, about 30,000. The white voters would now outnumber the negroes by 130,000, roughly speaking, were all adults, white and black, voting.

The framers of the constitution, of whom the dominating one was Senator B. R. Tillman, deliberately made registration for voting and the act of voting difficult. The result, as Mr. Eugene S. Blease said in an address at Saluda last Saturday, was to "assure the complete return of white supremacy". No danger was present then of a return of "carpetbag rule", but there was present a danger of a split in the white party and appeal by two opposing factions in a general election to negro voters. Besides, one congressional district, the Seventh, was still sending negroes to congress from time to time. A negro, George Washington Murray, was the representative of the district when the convention was in session.

---

The difficulty of voting has been greatly reduced by the amendment of the constitution requiring only the presentation of poll tax receipts, instead of all tax receipts as formerly. Registration and voting are now easy for all persons, white and colored. Women pay no poll taxes, literacy of the white people is general, and probably 70 or 75 per cent of the negroes can read and write. If the number of negroes of voting age in the state be 390,000, it is probable that, with the laws impartially administered, 265,000 could now cast ballots in general elections.

---

The News and Courier holds that the laws should be impartially administered. Whatever excuse for discrimination against negroes by boards of registration and managers of elections existed in 1895, has disappeared Unlawful ways of reducing the negro vote the white people having come to be the large majority, now react to the weakening and injury of the white man's character. However necessary, and, in fact, praiseworthy, were the methods of the white people in 1876 and following years, there was lasting damage to the character of the white race from them, and recovery from it is not yet perfect.

---

There remains some danger of a split in the white man's South Carolina party, of two parties appealing to the negroes. That would be, in The News and Courier's opinion, disastrous. It can be avoided, provided the white South Carolinians have the needful character and common sense. The way is plain. They can retain the exclusive white primary for the election of state, county and municipal officers. Within this primary may be factions, equivalent to parties, as have been at more than one period since 1890, submitting to the results of the primary as final. Thus would come the benefits of the two party system in the general assembly, in all state and municipal administration, and in a democracy an "opposition" is essential to good government. The absence of organized factions the last twenty-four years has been the principal cause of the ever-increasing futility and incompetence of general assemblies.

---

The repeal in 1938 of the requirement that voters in primaries be bound to vote for the national Democratic candidates for president and vice president was a wise and a long step toward the release of white South Carolinians from political servitude. In 1940 the party authorities nullified this repeal in part by ruling that intending voters for Mr. Willkie could vote, but could not offer for office in Democratic primaries. It was, of course, a preposterous ruling, and the party "leaders" who made it will live to repent it.

---

When Mr. Blease said that the "Democratic party (national) is giving much encouragement—I hate to say it—to the negro vote", he spoke the plain and simple truth, as Mr. James F. Byrnes, when a senator, spoke it in more sweeping terms ("the negroes are now in control of the Democratic party") on the floor of the senate in 1938. Any candidate now before the people for United States senator in South Carolina speaking against the participation of negroes in politics is disloyal to the Franklin D. Roosevelt national party, however numbskulls may be deceived to the contrary. That candidate is trying to ride two horses in opposite directions.

In respect of the Roosevelt party's negro policy the other two candidates should be compelled to express themselves. The people should make them speak out. No man in a mask should be elected to the senate in the primary, September 2.

Mr. Eugene S. Blease's plain-speaking was public service.

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
September 17, 1941

## You Will See by the Returns

The attention of persons who shall read the returns of the primary election for United States senator, in progress as this is written, September 16, is respectively directed to these figures of the census of 1940:

Of 1,083,766 white persons in South Carolina 455,478 were under the age of twenty years and 628,178 were twenty years old or older.

Iun the group twenty to twenty-four years old were 103,450. Some of these were between twenty and twenty-one years old, had not arrived at twenty-one, the voting age. Estimating them at 28,178, the finding is that in South Carolina were 600,000 white persons of voting age last year. Seventeen months have passed since the census was taken.

Readers of the primary returns will see for themselves the proportion of the white population the successful candidate for United States senator will represent.

The number of negroes of voting age in the state is nearly 400,000. A popular thought is that negroes are not to be considered as creatures to be represented in government.

The proportion of 600,000 white adults of South Carolina who are represented as a result of the election is "food for thought."

Are the 400,000 white adults who did not vote represented by the successful candidate while the 400,000 negroes who did not vote are not?

Figure it out for yourselves, Ladies and Gentlemen."

What is a mandate from "the people"?

The important point is, "Who's got the coon skin and gone?", as Captain Tillman used to say.

Atlanta Ga Journal
September 13, 1941

## Wonder Boy

BURNET RHETT MAYBANK is the wonder boy of South Carolina politics. The thumping victory the suave and cultured, slender and quiet young lawyer won in Tuesday's run-off primary for the senatorial nomination was something more than another step in a remarkable political career. It was sign and token of a departure by the State of South Carolina from customs by which the candidate who could holler the loudest, sweat the wettest and abuse Catholic, Jew or Negro the most was the hero of the people and the man of the hour.

If South Carolina, which clung to the old tradition long after the Vardamans and Heflins had lost their appeal in the deeper South, has reached the point where appeal to ignorance and racial prejudice no longer functions as masterly politics, can Georgia remain far behind?

In the South Carolina race, Olin Johnston made one abortive effort to inject the Negro into the campaign. He shouted that he was against the coeducation of whites and blacks. A profound silence greeted his declaration and he dropped the matter like a hot potato. His hearers knew that the State Constitution, like that of Georgia, prohibited such coeducation and that the statement was not only irrelevant but silly.

Young Mr. Maybank (he was 42 in March) has made a fine Governor by all accounts, an opinion that seems confirmed by his success Tuesday. He takes to Washington something of the aura that used to attach to Southern Senators as a class. He is patrician by birth, is highly educated and has civility of manners.

He is of the type of Governor Frank Dixon of Alabama and Governor Sam Houston Jones of Louisiana; like them, he is able to win before the people without speaking like an illiterate and stirring the baser passions. Southern politics seems to be improving in its morals.

Florence, S. C., Morning News
September 16, 1941

## "AGE OF LETHARGY"

Sooner or later we are coming back to the issues in South Carolina political campaigns. Or better say, we are coming to the issues. The senatorial campaign coming to a conclusion today was expected to treat largely of racional and international issues. Preceding campaigns have never really got down to the issues which should concern South Carloina political leaders.

In a sane word, The Columbia Record quotes the South Carolina Cotton Manufacturers association relative to the complacency of South Carolinians and calls this an "age of lethargy". The editorial comment of the Record deserves careful study and reflection among those who have the interest of the state at heart. It follows:

"The South Carolina Cotton Manufacturers association paints a farther disillusioning picture of South Carolina in a recent issue of its Clipsheet:

"Too few people in South Carolina care whether government is efficient or inefficient, too few care whether illiteracy is high and soils are depleted.

"Thousands of men and women in this state are concerned with the fact that our per capital income is lower and that resulting insufficient diets often leave a portion of the population physically unable to earn a decent wage.

"Thousands of others deplore the fact that educational facilities for Negroes are wholly inadequate

"But for every thousand of those who care there are other thousands too apathetic to give the situation a passing thought.

"They constitute one of our gravest problems."

"This puts the finger on South Carolina's failure to make the progress governmentally that might have been expected. For the reason is not that South Carolinians do not know what needs to be done and what could be done. There have been competent studies made revealing the need for reform and outlining the measures necessary to accomplish these reforms. South Carolina politicans have never been aroused about them for the simple reason that they know that a great majority of the voters are not concerned about them. In the political campaign the candidates talk about other things, ignoring these fundamentals which should be the issues, but the blame is not theirs but the voters.

"And so the state muddles through, awaiting the day when some of these things must be done because there will then be no choice left even though the doing will cost the state a great deal more money than would have been the case had justice and common sense prevailed now instead of politics. But until then lethargy and indifferenco are the rule."

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

## HARK FROM THE TOMB

Proposal for a return to the convention system in nominating candidates for governor and the United States senate is made by The Charleston News and Courier, the frankly tory journal of the Palmetto State. While there is scant chance that the proposal will be accepted, statistics put forward by the News and Courier emphasize the apathy of voters in availing themselves of the franchise.

The News and Courier also scored the expense incidental to waging a primary race and went so far as to suggest, perhaps not in entirely serious vein, that persons capable of financing such campaigns should be willing to serve without pay. "If we are to have a system limiting candidates to the rich, would it not be well to require them to serve for nothing except the honor and the power to give jobs to their friends?" it asks.

The News and Courier pointed out that in the South Carolina general election for United States senator September 30, the total vote cast was 12,950. Such indifference is understandable to a degree in a State where Democratic nomination is tantamount to election. In primary elections where the real contest lies, in South Carolina as in other Southern States, there is less excuse for voters failing to go to the polls.

Referring to the recent nomination and election of Gov. Maybank to the United States Senate, The News and Courier says:

"His commission is from a number of white Democrats somewhat greater than one-third of the persons enrolled to vote in primaries, and his vote in the general election was a percentage of the whole number of men and women in the State too small to calculate.

"This election has established beyond question that South Carolina is not a political democracy, and it will be remembered that The News and Courier does not pose as a democrat, (small 'd'). The State of South Carolina has thus sustained the position of The News and Courier.

"The South Carolina Democrats (party Democrats) having thus turned their backs on the primary system, they would as well return to the convention method of nominating candidates. At least it does not exclude men and women in moderate circumstances or poor from being candidates."

While The News and Courier's proposal to resurrect the long discredited convention system for gubernatorial and senatorial nominations will hardly evoke more than academic interest, it does serve to underline the apathy of entirely too many voters, not all of whom are in South Carolina, by any means.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

# 3 INDICTED IN S.C. VOTE CASE BY U.S. JURY

### Charge Trio Interfered With Civil Rights Of 4 Gaffney Women

DEC 6 1941

GAFFNEY, S. C.—(ANP)—Charges of violating Section 51, Title 18, United States code. "Conspiracy to oppress persons in exercise of civil rights, etc.," brought about the indictment of three white members of the election registration board by a federal grand jury here last Thursday.

The indictment charged the trio, F. E. Ellis, John E. Wright and T. E. Meetz, with interference with the voting and registration rights of four women. The case will probably be tried in Spartanburg during the court term which opens February 16, according to District

Attorney Oscar Doyle.

In the first of four counts, the charge is made that the defendants on or about September 2, 1940, "did unlawfully, feloniously and knowingly combine, conspire, confederate and agree together, with intent to injure, oppress, threaten and intimidate one Lottie P. Gaffney, a citizen, in the free exercise and enjoyment of a certain right and privilege secured to her by the constitution and laws of the United States—that is to say, the right to vote in the general election — for the purpose of electing presidential electors and a representative in the congress—the right and privilege to vote being granted and secured to her as a citizen of the United States by the constitution and laws of the United States."

DEC 6 1941

The second, third and fourth counts against the defendants are concerned with similar charges presented by Bernice Bonner, Lillian Bonner and Eva Mae Dawkins, being the allegedly intimidated persons.

This is the second time this case has been presented to the grand jury. In the first case, presented a year ago, the grand jury returned no bill. The first case to have such an indictment returned in it, it is heralded as a fore-runner of other indictments resulting from Klan activities in keeping Negroes from registering in 1939 in Greenville.

New Republic
New York, N. Y.

## Southern Electoral Reform League

MAR 24 1941

Last week we made mention of various movements now under way against the poll tax. Our principal interest was in the Geyer bill, but we also gave attention to movements aiming at the abolition of the poll tax through action in the states, rather than in Congress. One of the most vigorous of these movements is the Southern Electoral Reform League, with headquarters at 1801 Central National Bank Building, Richmond, Virginia. Its aim is a "direct frontal attack on the voter poll tax and the politicians who defend it." The General Board consists of representatives from the Southern states whose principal job will be the mobilizing of votes to elect state legislatures favorable to poll-tax repeal. Members of the board include Senator Claude Pepper, Governor Paul B. Johnson, Senator Josh Lee, Dr. Frank P. Graham and Julia Peterkin. We understand that applications for membership are pouring into the SERL headquarters and that the Board would greatly appreciate a similar flood of hard cash. The cause is an admirable one and any money devoted to the smashing of the poll-tax front is money

MAR 24 1941

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

# POLL TAX REPEALERS ARE CRUSHED 21 TO 11 IN TENNESSEE SENATE

## Vote On Motions To Reject All Three Bills Comes In Rapid-Fire Order

## EXPONENTS TO FIGHT ON

## But Result Precludes Further Action During Session

## COOPER HOLDS SILENCE

### Administration Leaders Active On Floor When Measures Are Brought Out—Roll Call Vote Announced

By PAUL MORRIS
From The Commercial Appeal
Nashville Bureau

NASHVILLE, Jan. 15.—In rapid-fire order Wednesday the Senate killed off the three bills by Senator Weldon White of Nashville to repeal the poll tax as a voting requirement in primaries and general elections, and precluded further action on similar measures during the session of the 72nd General Assembly.

JAN 16 1941

Vote on motions to reject each of the three repealers was 21 to 11, and came after repealists unsuccessfully fought to get the bills referred to the Education Committee, following an adverse report from the Committee on Privileges and Elections. The latter committee considered the repealers at a brief "executive session" Tuesday night, and when the Senate convened on Wednesday morning recommended the three bills be rejected.

**Roll Call Vote Given**

In an effort to salvage the measures, Senator White moved that the bills be referred to the Education Committee, but his motion was defeated when Senator Damon Headdon of Ridgely moved to table that motion. The Senate carried Mr. Headdon's motion, 18 to 11.

Then Mr. Headdon moved to call up Senate Bill 9, which repealed the poll tax statute, and reject it. The motion prevailed, 21 to 11, without debate.

The roll call on this motion and on similar motions on the other repealers showed the following vote:

For — Blount, Broome, Bryan, Buckles, Buntin, Cole, Dossett, Fuller, Garner, Calloway, Gilkey, Headdon, Hickerson, Kinkle, Loveless, Lyon, Mitchell, Morgan, Riggins, Tigrett, Speaker Maxwell.

Against the motion—Bass, Beasley, Brooks, Crawford of Blount; Graves, Hatfield, Holloday, Lindsay, Mahoney, White, McKinney.

**No Cooper Comment**

Governor Cooper, who told the Assembly in an address last week that poll tax repeal was a "matter for discretion of the Legislature," declined to comment when advised of the Senate's action.

Although the administration had failed to openly announce opposition to the repealers, administration leaders both in and out of the Legislature were active on the floor of the Senate when the bills were brought out. Similarly, prominent figures of the Shelby political organization were seated with the legislators during the discussions and vote on the repealers. Sheriff Guy Joyner and Dist. Atty. Gen. Will Gerber, lieutenants in the Shelby organization, conferred often with senators opposing the repealers. Wardlaw Steele of Ripley, chairman of the Democratic State Executive Committee; House Speaker John Ed O'Dell and Harold Wimberly, an administration supporter from Knoxville, sat beside senators throughout the proceedings, as did Conservation Commissioner J. Charles Poe and Insurance and Banking Commissioner James McCormick.

**Fight Isn't Over.**

After the measures had been rejected, Senator White declared, "We lost our first fight for a great principle, but the fight will continue until we are successful."

In trying to stave off rejection of the measures, Senator White was joined by Andy Graves, veteran senator from Knoxville, John T. Mahoney from Chattanooga, and Rube McKinney of Ashland City.

After the Headdon motion rejecting the general poll tax repealer had prevailed, Senator L. W. Morgan of Brownsville moved to call up Senate Bill 7, repealing the poll tax requirement in primaries, for rejection.

Senator White asked for permission to speak on the merits of the bill, and was finally recognized by Speaker Maxwell.

**White States Cause.**

"In urging passage of this bill," Senator White said, "I am speaking for from 80 to 90 per cent of the people of Tennessee, who want the poll tax repealed.

"There are thousands of people," he asserted, "who earn smaller salaries in Tennessee and cannot pay the $2 poll tax. Those people," he continued, "are entitled the same as you and I to vote for their representatives in this Legislature, yet they cannot do so because they cannot pay the poll tax. Some of you say you do not want to throw down the barriers so that the riffraff can vote, but I say now that this 'riffraff', as you call it, votes in other states, and those states have just as good government as does Tennessee."

He added that only eight states retain the poll tax as a voting requirement, and asked "are we to say that these eight states are right, and the other 40 states are wrong?"

JAN 16 1941

**Privilege Or Right?**

"We speak of the right of suffrage," Mr. White continued, "then if it is a right it ought not to be taxed. But if yor consider it a privilege the same as you do to drive an automobile, then continue to tax it as a privilege. If you don't want majority rule then put the poll tax at $50, so you will have an even more restricted vote in Tennessee than you have now," he added.

Referring to the draft, Senator White pointed out "that when you pick a man to go and fight for this democracy you don't ask whether or not he has paid his $2 poll tax to find out if he is eligible to fight for his country. Then why?" he asked, "should you make such a demand on him when he wants to have a voice in his government?"

Senator Morgan, speaking for his motion to reject, declared "this question of poll tax repeal is not a new one. A $2 poll tax for being permitted to vote for some candidate for office is not unreasonable, particularly since this money is used solely for the purpose of educating children and caring for school buildings. Could there be a better cause known to humanity than to help posterity through this aid to our education system?" he asked.

**$500,000 Involved**

Pointing out that in a majority of the counties of the state the primary elections are tantamount to general elections in picking officials, Senator Morgan said "at the time the poll tax was first enacted it was a much larger sum than it is today.

"This proposition as I see it," he continued, "is whether or not you are willing to take $500,000 annually away from the schools. Would you prefer to take this money from the schools in order to have the privilege of voting for a candidate of your choice?" he asked.

Senator Graves of Knoxville, speaking against the motion to reject, declared he believed the Constitution would not permit reduction of the poll tax below 50 cents, but added "I ran on a platform advocating poll tax repeal, and I never go back on my word."

**Will Attend Inaugural**

Senator Headdon offered the motion to reject the third White repealer removing the poll tax requirement in general elections, and it was approved by the 21 to 11 vote, without debate.

Meeting briefly, the House received a few local bills and some general bills amending the present labor laws.

Both houses will meet briefly Thursday morning and adjourn for the inaugural ceremonies, when Governor Cooper will take the oath of office for his second term. Also being inaugurated will be John Harton as state treasurer, and Bob Lowe as comptroller, both entering their second terms, and Joe C. Carr as secretary of state to replace A. B. Broadbent.

Jackson, Tenn. Sun
February 9, 1941

# NEGRO GROUP URGES POLL TAX PAYMENTS

The Southern Association for the Improvement of Colored Citizens Inc., is asking all colored citizens between the ages of 21 and 50 years to pay their poll tax at once in order to be able to vote in coming elections, according to P. L. Hardin, colored lawyer. Association headqquarters are at 403 S. Church St.

The legislative committee of the association has returned from the Legislature and will make its report on Feb. 20 in joint session with the Parent-Teachers Association of Merry High School. Several matters of importance will be discussed in this meeting as follows: (1) The progress made in aiding to secure vocational and manual training in colored high schools. (2.) The progress made on House Bill No. 509, whoch proposes to give equal educational opportunities for all negro students in Tennessee. (3). Discussion to prohibit dancing in the public school system in Tennessee as a form of recreation.

The committee reports of great improvements made by the Honorable Andrew T. Taylor, Jr., Commissioner of Institutions on the vocational school for Colored girls, located at Nashville under new management. The State Training & Agricultural School for Colored boys located at Pikeville. The committee still insists that the State Training & Agricultural school for colored boys should be removed from East Tennessee to a point nearer the center of the negro population. The committee is as follows: Rev. G. M. Banks, Willis Young, Prof. F. L. Smith, Attorney P. L. Harden, Rev. T. H. Donald.

Knoxville Tenn., Journal
October 12, 1941

# Negroes Push Registration

A movement to qualify prospective Negro voters, by having them register in the Oct. 16-17 supplemental registration, has been started by the Negro Progressive League.

The group Friday night selected members of a committee to direct registration of all Negroes who will be qualified to vote in the city primary, Nov. 6. Committee members are Walter Goodman, chairman; Monroe Young, Sylvia Kidd, Lula Meek and Frank Meek.

Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

# MANY COLORED LEADERS TAKE PART IN CONFERENCE ON DEMOCRACY HERE

FEB 28 1941

## Meeting Draws Large Crowd of Liberals Opposed To Poll Tax and Denial of Civil Rights

Approximately 300 representatives of Negro, trade union and professional groups answered the call of the executives of the Tennessee Conference on Democracy for a discussion on the vital issues effecting the people of the state and nation. The conference was held at the Andrew Jackson Hotel, Saturday and Sunday, February 22-23.

Of the more than 25 Negroes present from over the state, there were representatives of various N. A. A. C. P. branches, college, labor and youth groups. Other visitors added to this number. FEB 28 1941

In the opening session which was devoted to a discussion on Civil Rights, Leon Jourolman, State Public Utilities Commissioner, in analyzing fascistic tendencies in America, stated, "there are men in big business to whom democracy is only a rhetorical term." He further stated, "they would gladly compromise with Hitler if it meant profits leaving the little man holding the bag. FEB 28 1941

Dr. John B. Thompson, chairman Southern Conference for Human Welfare, with remarkable clarity and foresight declared, "the ancient and modern strategists have used the old imperialists' slogan, divide and conquer. They have pitted race against race and stepped in to share in the spoils," he added.

Prof. Lewis Jones of Fisk University led the forum discussion on Civil Rights. He frankly and unequivocally attacked the policy of many white groups in their fight for civil rights; in attempting to deal with the Negro as a separate problem. The popular professor of sociology asserted that the Negro problem is not necessarily a minority problem. Prof. Jones pointed out that the struggle for civil rights was a common one. FEB 28 1941

What could be considered most heartening were expressions coming from several 'rank and file' laboring people; calling for complete banishment of all discrimination in labor union. It is remembered that most of the blame is laid on these people for discrimination.

They were preceded by Hollis V. Reid, chairman, Legislative Board, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, who was credited with being greatly instrumental in arranging the meeting. He said, "human prejudice and human ignorance stand in our way," and admonished "all people to unite for the common good."

Negroes took an active part in each forum, including the session on the Poll Tax which was led by Jennings Perry of the Nashville Tennessean. W. W. Day, Rev. W. J. Faulkner, Mrs. E. W. Grant, Miss Rachel Taylor and President J. W. Haywood of Morristown College contributed greatly to successful Negro participation in the conference. It was decided that a permanent organization be established; to be known as the Tennessee Commonwealth Federation. Hollis V. Reid was elected chairman. On an Executive Board composed of 19 persons, two militantly active Negroes were elected: Collins George of LeMoyne College, Memphis; and Lewis Jones.

Organized to insure democracy for all peoples, the Federation bars no one from membership; at an annual fee of 50 cents. Many people mark it as significant of a new era in interracial cooperation.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

## Short, Partly Sweet

Tennessee's 72nd General Assembly has adjourned and gone home after a session that lasted only 41 days—34 days less than the period allowed by the Constitution. The performance was short but not entirely sweet, and it led to the rare opportunity of saying the General Assembly's sins of omission may have been worse than its sins of commission. FEB 18 1941

In general, the deliberations of the General Assembly were so well ordered that they practically ceased to be such in the proper sense of the word. Few things are worse than a legislative body that splits into minor and major factions, gets out of hand, deadlocks and delays, but it was no agreeable spectacle for the friends of democracy to see the General Assembly hop through the hoop with the unreasoning agility it displayed this time.

Poll tax repeal bills supplied the main controversy, and the early killing of them is subject to only qualified assent or dissent. Poll tax repeal as part of a well-reasoned plan of election reforms is badly needed in Tennessee and should be made a primary consideration for the next Legislature. Repeal without safeguards for the ballot, however, cannot stand intelligent scrutiny.

The Legislature likewise missed a chance to save money and increase efficiency when it failed to act on the fiscal control bill for the counties. It is easy enough to understand that county political rings got in their work on this one, and it is another measure that should be pushed with all energy. The oleo tax repealer, while a compromise not entirely satisfactory to either side, represented a long step in the right direction.

Particularly fortunate for Tennessee was the fact that the Legislature did not tamper with the power to impound funds when appropriations prove to be exceeding revenues. This will keep Tennessee's budget balanced, insure the continuance of an excellent credit rating, and leave the debt retirement plan working.

Tennessee's health program received needed and discriminating aid. Bonds in the sum of $500,000 were authorized for the construction of a state tuberculosis hospital, and help for county health units was afforded. The hospital will be of great service, particularly if it serves as a center for wide expansion of preventive work against tuberculosis as well as an agency for care and cure, or the arresting of the disease itself. FEB 18 1941

Taxes were left at their present level for the most part—no mean accomplishment—and in general the Legislature remained on the reservation. The disquieting thing was that the Legislature displayed no mind of its own as a rule, yielded to guidance too easily and unquestioningly. In this instance the power of control was used more for good than evil, but when such a system becomes intrenched the people have no guarantee that it will always be employed wisely and considerately in any degree.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# Tenn. Conference Seeks Action On Poll Tax Repeal

MAR 1 1941

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Feb. 27—A two-day conference for democracy was held during last week-end at the Andrew Jackson hotel under the sponsorship of 60 prominent Tennesseeans. The conferees discussed ways and means of safeguarding civil liberties and making effective the overwhelming sentiment of the people for the repeal of the poll tax law.

In drafting a concrete program of action, the conference stressed the "betrayal" of the people's right by the governor, certain elected representatives at the behest of corrupt poll tax machine politicians.

Many members of the race attended the conference and listed among the speakers was Lewis W. Jones of Fisk university. The roll of sponsors included Rev. W. F. Faulkner, Dr. Charles S. Johnson, Attorney Coyness Ennix and Mrs. E. W. Grant.

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

## Tennessee's Poll Tax

JAN 18 1941

While Gov. Prentice Cooper, in his address to the Tennessee Legislature, left the question of poll tax repeal to the Legislature, he restated publicly that he favors abolition of the poll tax and that he will sign a measure repealing the law if one is passed.

52e

The poll tax reform fight apparently is off to a tame start in Tennessee this time. Unless some influential legislators are pushing the repeal measure more vigorously than the governor it can hardly be expected that the Volunteer State will eliminate poll taxes at this session of the Legislature. But at least one more progressive step is being made.

Few governors of Alabama have dared to speak out in favor of poll tax reform. The question here, as in Tennessee, is considered political dynamite. But Alabama, too, is making educational advancements in its attitude toward outmoded suffrage laws, including the poll tax requirements.

Alabama probably will not be ready for several years to consider outright repeal of its poll tax requirements, but the state should be ready soon for shaving down the poll tax requirements. The cumulative features of our Alabama poll tax laws are the first evils that should be eliminated.

JAN 13 1941

The action of the Tennessee Assembly on the state's poll tax question will be watched with interest by Alabama and several other Southern states that still require poll tax payments.

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

## POLL TAX REPEAL BILLS ARE KILLED

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Jan. 15—(AP)—In lightning-like strokes, the Tennessee Senate killed Wednesday three poll tax repeal bills, and by repealing them stymied introduction of similar measures for two years.

JAN 1941

The controversy-laden legislation—a plank in the Democratic state convention platform, once urged by Gov. Prentic Cooper and carrying the public approval of Shelby County (Memphis) political leader, E. H. Crump—was ground under by a vote of 21-11. One senator was absent and did not wote.

52e

A strong administration bloc defeated the bills sponsored by Senator Weldon B. White, of Nashville, and supported the Senate's four Republicans and secen scattered Democrats.

The sudden death to repeal of the tax as a prerequisite for voting in Tennessee—one of eight states with such a tax—came on separate votes on each bill, after a preliminary ballot to refer all three to an education committee had met defeat, 18-11.

The three bills would have repealed the tax in primary elections, general elections and finally eliminated the whole law. The committee on privileges and elections, to which they were referred, reported the bills out with an unfavorable recommendation Wednesday after refusing a petition from women's organizations for public hearings.

JAN 15 1941

White asserted another effort would be made in two years to repeal the law.

News
Birmingham, Ala.

## Anti-Poll Tax Bills Fail In Tennessee

JAN 15 1941

52e

NASHVILLE—(AP)—The Senate rejected Wednesday by votes of 21 to 11 all three of the White bills dealing with poll tax repeal.

The action makes it impossible for bills of similar nature to be considered for the next two years.

The vote to reject the bills was taken after the Senate had voted down, 18 to 11, a motion by Senator A. J. Graves to refer the bills to the committee on education.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

### POLL TAX NOT ALL

FEB 1 1941

To The Commercial Appeal:

In 1940, 27½ per cent of the people of Tennessee voted. Total population 2,919,998. In 1888, when there was no poll tax requirement, 90 per cent of the eligibles voted. In 1892, with poll tax, 71 per cent voted. In 1900 68 per cent voted. Then follows percentages: 60 per cent, 57 per cent, 46 per cent, 35 per cent, 30 per cent, and last 27½ per cent. The years taken were not always consecutive, but the lesson is plain. The agitation is to keep the New Deal in power. The meat in the cocoanut is farmers are tenants too largely. Just restore the lands so a voter can think of himself and others jointly and not of himself alone. It's wider than a mere matter of poll tax.

FEB 1941

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

## Plan Poll Tax Repeal

52e

We hope our esteemed friends in the pulpit will not go "all out" for repeal of the poll tax as advocated by Howard Lee and his percussionists in their letters to Tennessee clergy without examining carefully the possible results of the campaign as planned.

JAN 9 1941

Obviously to withdraw all restrictions on voting (except age) after operating under the poll tax would bring about a chaotic condition at the polls. Since only a few counties in Tennessee have a registration system at present, repeal of the poll tax should be contemplated only in conjunction with a permanent registration law. Yet we find little mention among the pressure groups of a registration law. Why? Because like many pressure groups, these do little long-range planning. Give them a slogan and a "cause" and they are off!

The Commercial Appeal is for repeal of a poll tax, for there should be no premium placed on a voter's right to express his opinion through the ballot. It DOES insist, however, that the voter must be a qualified voter, capable of exercising that judgment and protected against coercion or temptation.

If the poll tax is to be repealed, then the election laws MUST be revised to give the voter that protection. It must be a coordinated move, if possible, a simultaneous action lest iniustice creep in.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## FEDERAL ACTION NEEDED, IS HINT

FEB 8 1941

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6—(ANP)—Back from a trip to the deep South where he went as an observer for the Department of Justice, Amos W. Woodcock, formerly prohibition administrator, under President Hoover, handed in a confidential report to the attorney general, which it is believed, will lead to a thorough investigation of the charges against the white residents of Brownsville, Tenn.

Mr. Woodcock was firm in his belief that if the government through its Department of Justice sent qualified investigators to Brownsville a case could be built which would stand in the Federal courts and justice brought to the citizens who sought their legal rights at the polls and tried to vote.

Observing the legal aspects of the case, Mr. Woodcock visited in Brownsville not in the capacity of an investigator, but as a lawyer, and discussed with white and colored residents of the town the terrors that prevailed in the little village when these Negroes went to vote.

"It seems," said Mr. Woodcock, "that the trouble started when the colored folk protested the election of a school superintendent. They went to the wrong place to make their protest and the poorer element of the town became suspicious that these Negroes wanted to vote.

"Prior to this, it seems to me" said Mr. Woodcock, "that the lations between the two races had been as good as they are in any southern town. But if the government sends trained investigators into this village, they will find sufficient evidence to tie up the loose ends and bring a good case of conspiracy against the perpetrators of the crimes. Of course, the government cannot try anyone for murder, but it can be proven that murder was incidental in the case."

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## CAN'T GET POLL TAX REMOVED

### Memphians Declare Tennessee Legislature Blocks Action.

FEB 8 1941

MEMPHIS, Feb. 6—(ANP)—Many civic-minded Memphians who have long fought for removal of the poll tax as a pre-requisite to voting, are vigorously protesting the recent action of the Senate committee on Privileges and Elections of the Tennessee Legislature, which, these citizens declare, has blocked action on the poll tax for this session.

They pointed out that Senator Bland Maxwell, speaker of the senate, and leader of the Edward H. Crump (local political big-wig) delegation, appointed the following members of this important committee:

FEB 8 1941

Senator Hugh Calloway from Polk County (big plantation section); Senator Lawrence Morgan from Brownsville, Tenn., (scene of the recent lynching); Senator Damon Headdon, 3 West Tennessee plantation counties; Senator Howell Bunton, 3 more West Tennessee counties with heavy Negro population; Senator Roy Hickerson (with Crump machine) and Senator William Buckles, East Tennessee Democrat from 2 Republican counties.

Hapeville, Ga., Review
January 31, 1941

## Clergymen Ask Repeal of Memphis Poll Tax; Is 72-Year-Old Law—

The Memphis Ministerial Association, after a spirited debate as to whether or not the repeal of poll tax restrictions was a "moral issue," voted overwhelmingly to petition the Tennessee legislature to repeal the state's present poll tax law. The association is believed to be the first church group to take such action. The fight to repeal Tennessee's 72-year-old poll tax law, passed originally to disqualify Negro "republicans," following the Civil War, was begun by Memphis newspapers and has been taken up by progressive organizations throughout the state.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# Prosecution of Tenn. Anti-Vote Pickets Sought

JAN 25 1941

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—(ANP)—Indictments against persons responsible for the recent picketing of Dr. J. B. Martin's drug store in Memphis, charging violation of Federal civil rights statutes, are asked in a letter sent to Attorney General Robert Jackson in Washington by the Southern Confernce for Human Welfare.

At the same time, Howard Lee, conference secretary, urged Tennessee citizens to continue their fight for repeal of the poll tax, which would tend to alleviate conditions resulting in the Martin picketing.

Ed Crump, political machine leader of Memphis, is "evidently determined to stamp out any movement for independence in Memphis," the conference secretary stated in another letter to President Roosevelt.

In the meantime, the fight of the people of Tennessee against the poll tax machine of Memphis opened up on a new front when Senator Weldon White and Representative Frank Hall introduced several bills for poll tax repeal in the Tennessee legislature, which convened on January 6.

Dr. Martin's Republican party activity last fall resulted in a six-week siege of his store by police officers who harassed all customers by frisking and questioning them.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# POLL TAX FIGHT OPENS IN TENN.

JAN 9 1941

## People Organized To Push Repeal Through Legislature This Session

A fight for the free ballot in Tennessee that will go down in history is opening in Nashville, in the recently convened state legislature.

With many attacks frustrated in the past, mass delegations organized by labor organizations and League of women voters from all parts of the state will be on guard for the sly tricks of the reactionary politicians. Time after time legislators and governors, including present Governor Prentice Cooper, have been elected on a poll tax repeal platform, only to evade their promises in office. Governor Cooper, popularly held to be influenced, if not controlled by Crump, avoided taking a stand in his message to the Legislature this week.

**Main bulwark of poll tax system in Tennessee is the Crump political machine in Memphis—chief benefactor of the system.**

In the past the Crump poll tax machine has been able to fight anti-poll tax forces from Middle and East Tennessee to a stand-still.

### WILL DEFY CRUMP

Indications now are that large delegations of people of Memphis under auspices of the Citizens Committee for Repeal of the Poll Tax will defy Crump and join delegations from other parts of the state in a march to the Capital.

JAN 9 1941

**On January 7 the Memphis Ministerial Association went on record for repeal. The same night the Nashville City Council unanimously memorialized the legislature to kill the tax which was enacted into law by the legislature of 1890 to prevent the common people, both Negro and white, from voting.**

The Crump delegation will be solid against repeal according to its leader, Senator Steward, also president of the Senate, and well it may be, for the machine's very existence hangs to a considerable extent upon control of voters through the corrupt poll tax system.

### ORGANIZATIONS WORK

Representatives of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, the Tennessee Industrial Union Council, League of Women Voters, and Tennessee Federation of Labor are button-holing legislators in support of the bills introduced in the Senate by Sen. Weldon White of Davidson to repeal the statute (Sec. 1082) which levies a poll tax and makes it a prerequisite for voting in primaries and general elections. Similar bills have been introduced in the House by Hall, Dickson, Cummings, Cannon, Robinson and Carter.

JAN 9 1941

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Races Organize New Federation

MAR 1 1941

NASHVILLE — (SNS) — Condemning the Crump-Cooper-controlled state legislature for failing to repeal the poll tax, the Tennessee Commonwealth federation went on record here requesting members of the Tennessee congressional delegation to support federal action to free the ballot through voting for the Geyer anti-poll tax bill.

Over 300 delegates of both races, representing labor unions, religious groups, civic organizations and women's clubs, voted to establish the Tennessee Commonwealth Federation. The purposes of the organization is to "join in common cause all men and women for concerted independent political action to the end that democracy of, by, and for the people may not perish."

Throughout the conference the need for an organized people's movement to free the ballot and to safeguard civil liberties and the rights of labor was stressed. Hollis V. Reid of Memphis, chairman of the legislative board of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen was elected chairman of the organization.

MAR 1 1941

### THOMPSON, PERRY SPEAKERS

Speakers included the Rev. John H. Thompson, chairman of the Southern Conference of Human Welfare, of Norman, Okla., and Jennings Perry, editorial writer of the Nashville Tennessean.

The resolution on civil liberties said, "To curtail the rights of any group is to endanger the rights of all people. In these days of war hysteria selfish and anti-demo[illegible] reats are seeking to get faith against faith, race against race, and group against group in order to divide the people and to destroy democracy for their own profits. We oppose any form of oppression and discrimination practiced against religious or racial minorities and against labor."

Lewis W. Jones, professor of sociology at Fisk University, who with Collins George of LeMoyne college, Memphis, was elected to the federation's executive board, told delegates the Negro's plight. In an address that was well received, he said in part:

### SAYS RACE USED

"The Negro problem is not one of majority rule. The Negro population in the south has been used less ferociously it is true, in much the same fashion as the Jews have been used in Germany by Hitler. In both instances small groups of power-bent men have directed the attention of the people against the racial minority in one instance and the religious minority in the other in order to work their will in the midst of the fear and prejudice they have fostered.

MAR 1 1941

"If clearly defined issues existed on which Negroes disagreed with white people and so constituted themselves political minority it would be a different situation. But no such difference exists. The only thing which fundamentally sets Negro Tennesseeans apart from white Tennesseans is color. They speak the same language, share the same religious beliefs, and want the same things for which their white neighbors aspire—jobs that pay a living wage, schools for their children, and peace and security in which they can live full lives. Not only are the general aims of American life the most sincere hopes of Negroes but among them are to be found duplicated all of the differences found in the white population.

### HITS MEMPHIS SITUATION

"This persecution of Negroes in Memphis seems to be tied up with two important civil rights which effect the white population: freedom to vote as they please, and the right to labor organization. It began with the realization on the

three to one. The power of old prejudices is so strong, however, that many people will oppose poll tax repeal because someone tells them that such repeal would let Negroes vote. Those who take this stand are literally cutting off their noses to spite their faces."

[illegible] racial angle publicly but under- [illegible] neath there has been rumbling on [illegible] that point. There is no chance for [illegible] Negroes to out vote the white pop- [illegible] ulation in Tennessee since the [illegible] whites out number them about

part of the Crump machine that drive against the organized rubber workers in Memphis who have a [illegible] groes were not entirely in- large Negro membership. [illegible] timidated and were planning to The right to vote campaign in [illegible] pile up a large Republican protest Tennessee has not played up the [illegible] vote. Coincident with it was the

Chattanooga, Tenn., Free Press
January 7, 1941

# News-Free Press Daily Forum

## Negroes Deceived

### Voters' League Approves 'Hypocrisy Won' Editorial

*To The Chattanooga News-Free Press:*

We, the Colored Voters' League of Greater Chattanooga, wish to express our sincere appreciation for the timely editorial regarding "Hypocrisy Won," which appeared in The News-Free Press Wednesday, Dec. 18, 1940.

We heartily agree that a large number of Chattanooga Negroes were deceived into voting the Democratic ticket last November 5, both in the national and state elections. During the presidential campaign our national and local organizations informed the Negroes of the previous actions of the Democrats, and asked them, in reviewing these actions, to watch the newly-acquired friendship for fear it may be "crocodile."

We can say, that so far as we know, the Democrats of Chattanooga have not reacted in the manner that their fellow Memphis Democrats have toward the Negroes. We hope this present campaign of revenge on Negroes for breaking with Mr. Crump's political iron ring and especially the motivating slogan which was conceived by our newly-re-elected Gov. Cooper, when he said that, "This is a white man's country, and the Negroes had no part in the establishing and maintaining it," will awaken the Negroes of Chattanooga and of Tennessee to the fact of this predicted hypocrisy.

But in closing we will use th words of one of the ex-governors of our great state, Tennessee, in replying to an article of criticism on the part of the governor.

That appeared in one of Nashville's papers. This is what he said after stating his name: "He is more to be pitied than censured."

Respectfully and cordially yours,
THE COLORED VOTERS' LEAGUE OF CHATTANOOGA.
J. A. Moore,
J. W. Millsaps,
R. L. Goodwin,
G. W. Coker,
J. W. Williams,

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla

# Continue Fight Against Corrupt Poll Tax Political Machine of Boss Crump

### Many Negroes Forced To Leave City As Crump Seeks To Cause Race Riot

MAR 1 1941

### Department of Justice Silent

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Pushing its fight against the corrupt poll-tax political machine of Boss Crump, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare has called an emergency Conference for Democracy in Tennessee, stated Howard Lee, Conference secretary, in an interview today.

The Conference next meeting will be in Nashville, February 22 23, the weekend of Washington's birthday MAR 1 1941

Prominent race leaders joined with leaders of all branches of organized labor at the call of the Southern Confernece in sponsoring the Conference to preserve civil liberties and restore majority rule in Tennessee." Sentiment for holding the Conference grew rapidly following the failure of the Department of Justice to take any positive action against the Crump reign of terror in Memphis which continues today. Thousands of Negro citizens have been forced to leave the city by the Crump machine which is seeking to bring about a race riot. While the people of Memphis live from day to day in fear of their lives, the oppressive hand of the Crump machine has reached out over the whole state of Tennessee. Recently "the overwhelming sentiment of the people for poll tax repeal was cynically betrayed by the governor and many elected representatives, read the Conference Call. This action of the state legislature was ordered by Boss Crump and carried through by his rubber stamp governor, "This is a white man's country", Prentice Cooper. MAR 1 1941

A home guard bill has recently been steamrollered through the legislature which in practice would license anti-labor and undemocratic elements to engage in vigilante attacks on the fundamental rights of all citizens", the Call continues.

"We are today witnessing a blitzkrieg on labor and common people never before equaled in Tennessee," stated Secretary Lee at Conference headquarters in the Hotel Andrew Jackson. "This attack by the forces of reaction is aimed at wiping out our democratic rights entirely. And it is high time that the people of Tennessee, Negro and white, united on this a real battlefront of American democracy!" MAR 1 1941

Among the featured speakers of the Conference will be Professor Lewis J. Jones, prominent sociologist of the Fisk university faculty and a member of the Central Labor Council of Nashville.

Other speakers include the Rev. John B. Thompson, chairman of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare; Jennings Perry, associate editor of the Nashville Tennessean; Hollis V. Reid, chairman of the State Legislative Board, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen; and Leon Jourolman jr., Railroad and Public Utilities Commissioner of Tennessee.

Prominent sponsors include: Dr. Charles S. Johnson of Fisk university; the Rev. W. J. Faulkner, prominent Nashville clergyman; Mrs. E. W. Grant, secretary of the Nashville N. A. A. C. P.; and Mr. Coyness Ennix, well known N. A. A. C. P. attorney.

Other sponsors are: George Cate, chairman, Tennessee Conference of Social Work; Mr. William Turnblazer, president, District 19, United Mine Workers of America; Dr. William E. Cole, head of Department of Sociology, University of Tennessee; Mr. T. E. Archer, legislative chairman, Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen; Dr. P. P. Claxton, president, Peay Normal School; Miss Louise Davis, president, Nashville Women's Legislative League; the Rev. Charles Houk; Dr. George Mayhew, School of Religion, Vanderbilt university; Miss Ina Scherrebeck, secretary, Y. W. C. A. of Nashville; Mrs. Joe H. Wright, civic leader of Sweetwater, Tenn.; Mr. T. O. Denham, legislative representative, Tennessee Federation of Labor; and Miss Louise Young, professor of Scarritt college.

Conference chairman will be Mr. W. O. Lowe, prominent Knoxville attorney.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# Tennesseans To Fight For Poll Tax Law

### Interracial Group Organizes Federation

MAR 8 1941

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—(ANP) — Condemning the state legislature for failing to repeal the poll tax, the Tennessee Commonwealth Federation went on record here requesting members of the Tennessee congressional delegation to support federal action to free the ballot through voting for the Geyer anti-poll tax bill.

Over 300 delegates of both races.

representing labor unions, religious groups, civic organizations and women's clubs, voted to establish the Tennessee Commonwealth federation. The purposes of the organization is to "join in common cause all men and women for concerted independent political action to the end that democracy of, by, and for the people may not perish."

Speakers included the Rev. John H. Thompson, chairman of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, of Norman, Okla.; Jennings Perry, editorial writer of the Nashville Tennesseean, and Lewis W. Jones, professor of sociology at Fisk University.

The resolution on civil liberties said, "To curtail the rights of any group is to endanger the rights of all people. In these days of war hysteria, selfish and anti-democratic interests are seeking to get faith against faith, race against race, and group against group in order to divide the people and to destroy democracy for their own profits. We oppose any form of oppression and discrimination practiced against religious or racial minorities and against labor."

Mr. Jones, with Collins George of LeMoyne College, Memphis, was elected to the federation's executive board.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# BATTLE SHIFTS TO GEYER BILL

JAN 2 3 1941

## Tennessee Aroused Over Machine Inspired Defeat Of Poll Tax Bill

Lovers of Liberty throughout Tennessee this week joined in a national campaign to pass the Geyer bill at this session of Congress. This move followed the betrayal by their state legislators who, in spite of pre-election pledges, last week killed a bill freeing the franchise in Tennessee.

**The bill to repeal the poll tax in Tennessee was defeated through the high-handed manipulation of the Crump-Cooper political machine, declared anti-poll tax leaders when interviewed in Nashville Tuesday by a Southern News Almanac representative. Fearing the growing sentiment of the people for poll tax abolition and the threat that a mass lobby would descend on the capital, the bill was rushed to a quick vote and killed.**

Efforts of repeal forces to restore majority rule in Tennessee are continuing. State Senator John T. Mahoney, a leader in the anti-poll tax movement and a backer of the Geyer bill, this week introduced a bill in the State Senate to abolish the poll tax as a pre-requisite to voting in Chattanooga city elections.

Other bills are being introduced in the Legislature to abolish the poll tax for women and to cut the tax to fifty cents. Another bill reduces the age of poll tax liability from fifty years to twenty-two.

### NEED FOR GEYER BILL CLEAR

Southern Conference for Human Welfare leaders when interviewed in the failure of the Tennessee Legislature to repeal the poll tax, declared that this action made clear to every Southerner the need for federal anti poll tax legislation. Conference secretary, Howard Lee, quoted the **Nashville Tennessean,** leader in the statewide newspaper campaign to restore majority rule in Tennessee:

**"Of the eight poll tax states, only Tennessee had the tax only by legislative act and could be rid of it by simple legislative repeal. And if in Tennessee the Legislature could be so controlled by special interests, so disloyal to the people and the public welfare, as to deny liberation of the suffrage, where, but to Congress (specifically enjoined by the Constitution to enact necessary legislation to guarantee republican government in all of the states, should the people turn for relief?"**

"First step," stated Mr. Lee, "in the Southern Conference campaign for passage of the Geyer bill will be a concerted nation-wide drive to secure the necessary 218 signatures to petition the bill out of the Judiciary Committee to which it has again been referred this year."

JAN 2 3 1941

"Last year," he continued, "through the efforts of the Southern oligarchy in Washington, chief beneficiary of the poll tax, the bill was killed in committee. Poll Tax Congressman Hatton W. Sumners of Texas is chairman of this committee, which includes a number of other poll tax representatives. Even the official report of the hearings on the Geyer bill was not allowed to be printed."

### PUSHED ON ANOTHER FRONT

On another front the Southern Conference is pushing poll tax abolition. In cooperation with the United Mine Workers of America, the Conference has taken the case of Henry Pritle, a Tennessee mountaineer, denied the right to vote in a federal election, to the courts. A decision in this case is now pending from the Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati. If adverse, it will be appealed to the Supreme Court.

**In Arkansas, too, a Southern Conference affiliate, the Arkansas Anti-Poll Tax Council, is working to restore a free ballot. A bill repealing the state poll tax is being introduced in the Legislature which convened on January 13.**

"No greater issue today confronts the American people," declared Lee, "than restoring to the people of the eight poll tax states the right to vote. The spectacle of leaders who should know better going 'hell bent for leather' into another 'war for democracy' 3,000 miles away, while 10 million Southerners are disfranchised in the land of their fathers is something to behold."

JAN 2 3 1941

Mr. Lee urged that every person and every organization join in the concentrated campaign of writing letters and passing resolutions directed to their Congressmen demanding immediate passage of the Geyer bill.

**Action to abolish the poll tax as a pre-requisite for voting in federal elections was initiated by the Southern Conference for Human Welfare in August, 1939. A bill drafted by the Southern Conference following its historic first meeting in Birmingham in 1938 was introduced by Congressman Lee Geyer.**

Since the bill was introduced, scores of national organizations have gone on record supporting the Geyer bill. Among these groups are the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America, the Young Women's Christian Association, the National League of Women Voters, the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Railway Labor Executives' Association, the National Negro Congress and the Brotherhood of Protective Order of Elks of the World.

Poll tax abolition was supported by President Franklin D. Roosevelt who declared in 1938, "They (poll taxes) are inevitably contrary to the fundamental democracy and its representative form of government . . ." (Mr. Roosevelt has since, to our knowledge, never opened his mouth for poll tax repeal.—Editor's note.)

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

**BETTER BRIDLE HIM, COLONEL, OR YOU'RE RIDIN' FOR A FALL!**

Globe and
Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

# Twenty-one Vote Against Measure; Eleven For Repeal

## Senators White And Bass Of Davidson County Keep Pledges Made To Vote For Elimination Of Evil...

JAN 17 1941

Twenty-one members of the Tennessee State senate, some of whom broke faith with solemn pledges and all of whom defied the majority will of the people of their state, on Wednesday, January 15, temporarily halted the crusade to outlaw the disfranchisement of this state's citizens by the slick device of requiring them to pay a poll tax to exercise their right of suffrage.

The members who gave poll tax repeal a knock-out drop were forced to act on Wednesday because they knew that there was about to gather on Capitol Hill such a crowd of irate Tennesseans such as has not been seen there since the days of Hill McAlister as Governor. At that time the people gathered and thwarted the attempt of the McAlister regime to saddle a sales tax on the people.

The temporary defeat of the effort to repeal the poll tax was accomplished by the device of referring the repeal bill to a committee stacked against repeal, and then have that committee report the bill to the senate with the recommendation that it should not be passed. Only one senator of the committee, and he Davidson County's Senator J. O. Bass, voted to recommend passage of the repeal bill, which was introduced in the senate by Davidson County's other senator, the Hon. Weldon B. White.

The action of the senate in upholding the stacked committee's report precludes the offering of a similar bill at this session of the legislature. However the forces for repeal will not relax their efforts to get some sort of a repeal bill passed, and most certainly are girding for a battle against the politicians who are striving to stave off a repeal victory.

The twenty-one senators voting for repeal and the eleven stalwarts who remained true to their promise and stood with the people agains the politicians are listed as follows:

**For Rejection**

Harold Blount of Savannah,
James J. Broome of Clarksville
Marvin Bryan of Lawrenceburg.
W. A. Buckles of Kingsport,
Howell Buntin of Jackson,
Hugh R. Calloway of Loudon,
Sam Cole of Memphis,
R. L. Dossett of Tullahoma,
A. N. Fuller of Gallatin,
C. E. Garner of Trenton,
Sam Gilkey of Paris,
Damon Headden of Ridgely,
Roy Hickerson of Wincheste
floor leader for the governor),
R. G. Kinkle of Memphis,
C. D. Loveless of Spring Hill,
P. A. Lyon of Murfreesboro,
W. F. Mitchell of Sparta,
L. W. Morgan of Brownsville,
Frazier Riggins of Dover,
Parks Tigrett of Newbern,
Speaker Blan Maxwell of Mem
his—21.

**Against Rejection**

James O. Bass of Nashville,
I. D. Beasley of Carthage,
Hubert Brooks of Johnson City,
John C. Crawford of Maryville,
A. J. Graves of Knoxville,
Paul Hatfield of Tazewell,
John D. Holloday of Cookeville
Robert Lindsay of Lake City,
John T. Mahoney of Chatta-
nooga.
W. N. McKinney of Ashland City
B. White of Nashville—11.

---

Doctor: Nothing but an operation will save your life.
Patient: And how much will an operation cost?
Doctor: About five hundred dollars.
Patient: But I have only a hundred dollars.
Doctor: In that case, let us see what pills will do.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# POLL TAX FIGHT GAINS STRENGTH

JAN 16 1941

## Tennessee People Are Gathering Forces To Block Machine Politicians' Conspiracies

**BULLETIN LEAD: Nashville, Tenn.—In four separate votes in a stormy session, the Tennesse Senate rejected three bills to repeal the poll tax. The fight will go on!**

JAN 16 1941

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Fight against Tennessee's poll tax was developing strength fast this week as the people rallied to the battle and machine politicians rushed to block the measure before the full force of the people could be presented.

Under the auspices of a recently formed Tennessee Committee for Majority Rule, a state-wide meeting was held at the Hermitage Hotel here Wednesday. Mrs. Carl V. Stafford, of Knoxville, president of the Tennessee League of Women Voters, is taking a leading role in the fight. Delegates from over the state attended the meet-

**Appealing to every clergyman in Tennessee to preach sermons on "The Poll Tax as a Moral Issue in Our Democracy," the Southern Conference for Human Welfare was continuing its campaign against the poll tax.**

Charging that the Crump-McKellar machine is conspiring in the cloakrooms to defy the rising demand of the people to repeal the poll tax, Rev. John B. Thompson, Southern Conference chairman, called on his fellow clergymen to aid in making it possible for the poor to have a voice in their government.

### POWER OF PEOPLE

Organizational plans are being perfected, declared Howard Lee, Southern Conference executive secretary, when interviewed in Birmingham Wednesday, to organize a statewide lobby so large and so strong that the Legislature will not be able to ignore or sidetrack their demands. The conference will work jointly with the Committee for Majority Rule in the campaign.

In his letter to the Tennessee pastors, Rev. Thompson said: "That poll tax repeal is not only a political issue, but a moral question, which demands the earnest attention of the religious and ethical leaders of our state, is clear. Last week, you will be pleased to know, the Ministerial Association of Memphis, a city which has long felt the heavy weight of the oppressive Crump machine, took the lead in demanding that this session of the Legislature repeal the poll tax. Said the Rev. Dr. J. Ralph Roberts: 'Tennessee stays in the hills on too many of these issues. The poor have no voice and it is up to the church to petition for them. That has been our right since the Constitution was founded. I ask you now to exercise your religious and patriotic franchise.'"

### NEED TO SPEAK OUT

**"What is needed if we are to repeal the poll tax law and to bring democracy to Tennessee is for our ministers throughout the state to speak out as did our fellow clergymen in Memphis."**

JAN 16 1941

The letter not only urged the pastors to preach a sermon, but asked that church organizations pass resolutions, that delegations stand ready to come to Nashville, and that letters be written to members of the legislature.

**"The issue as to whether 10,000,000 Southerners are to remain disfranchised in the eight states still cursed with the poll tax is one of the gravest problems confronting American democracy." Rev. Thompson wrote. "Repeal of the poll tax in Tennessee would give impetus to repeal in the other seven states as well as to federal legislation now pending in Congress."**

JAN 16 1941

While the repeal forces were marshaling strength, the politicians were working furiously. Crump machine delegation leader and President of the Senate, Blan Maxwell has packed the Committee on Privileges and Elections with machine leaders from West Tennessee. These machine leaders fear losing control if the poll tax is repealed.

**The Nashville Tennessean, which is campaigning for the repeal of the poll tax, charged in a Wednesday story that, "Word has gotten around that the poll tax repeal bills must be beaten and those legislators who 'stay on the right side of the fence' may dip their hands in the political gravy up to the elbows."**

The Senate Committee on Rules of which Senator R. G. Hinkle of Memphis is chairman, has also been packed with machine men.

Globe and
Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

## REPEAL THE POLL TAX

JAN 16 1941

At a time when dictatorships are on the march both at home and abroad, it is gratifying to learn that the Nashville delegation to the present session of the Tennessee Legislature proposes to show due respect for the positions to which the people have elected them. It is to be hoped that our representatives, both in the senate and in the house will be so alert and determined as to win a majority of the legislature to their way of thinking.

There has been no recent change in the fundamental law of this nation or of the states which provides for three coordinate branches of government—legislative executive and judicial. The legislative executive and judicial. The legislative body is still supposed to make the laws. It most certainly is not, as has appeared too often in recent years, a group of men who meet for the purpose of finding out what the executive department of government wants them to do and to take pride in telling how loyally they have carried out an executive's program.

The present legislature ought not to admit that it has been hog-tied, in advance of the opening day, to put through a resolution to conclude the legislative session at the expiration of 50 days, thus cutting off one-third of the regular session on the pretense that this is necessary to save expenses.

Cutting the session down to 50 days seems to be a pet project of Gov. Cooper. He has no more right to be putting the heat to members of the legislature, and telling them to get their work done and get out of town or off Capitol Hill, than the members have to insist that he stay on the job a definite number of days and hours looking after the duties of the governorship.

Members of the legislature know full well who it is that wants them to shorten the legislative session to the number of days that will barely provide time to put over the governor's program and to pass necessary local bills. It is the minority in Tennessee that wants to kill the chance to repeal the poll tax.

Tennessee's machine "dictatorship" does not want the poll tax repealed. The machine seeks to stave off repeal by a short session, by appeals to race prejudice, by the pretense that schools will suffer if the small fund the poll tax payments provide is cut off.

We hope the present legislature will ignore all of the subterfuges that will be used to prolong machine domination in Tennessee. We hope the poll tax is repealed and that Nashville's delegation, proud of the history this city has made in giving the people clean and honest elections, will provide the leadership that will wipe the poll tax form of disfranchisement off the statute books of this state.

52e-1941
Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

# Tenn. Conference Seeks Action On Poll Tax Repeal

MAR 1 1941

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Feb. 27—A two-day conference for democracy was held during last week-end at the Andrew Jackson hotel under the sponsorship of 60 prominent Tennesseeans. The conferees discussed ways and means of safeguarding civil liberties and making effective the overwhelming sentiment of the people for the repeal of the poll tax law.

In drafting a concrete program of action, the conference stressed the "betrayal" of the people's right by the governor, certain elected representatives at the behest of corrupt poll tax machine politicians.

Many members of the race attended the conference and listed among the speakers was Lewis W. Jones of Fisk university. The roll of sponsors included Rev. W. F. Faulkner, Dr. Charles S. Johnson, Attorney Coyness Ennix and Mrs. E. W. Grant.

Chattanooga, Tenn. Daily Times
May 24, 1941

# POLITICAL GROUP WILL MEET HERE

## To Plan Organization of a Unit of Commonwealth Federation in City

An organization meeting to plan a Chattanooga unit of the Tennessee Commonwealth federation will be held at 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon in Hotel Patten, with speakers listed as Dr. Alva W. Taylor, of Nashville, and Lewis Jones, of Fisk university, a member of the Nashville Trades and Labor council.

A temporary committee has been planning the organizational meeting of the local unit to be composed of representative citizens from the ranks of church, Negro, labor and civic organizations.

The federation is made up of a state executive board of nineteen members and a state committee of twenty-five who are responsible to the district organizations, Commonwealth clubs, and individual members throughout the state.

The group describes itself as "an independent political organization of the people of Tennessee irrespective of occupation, race, creed or sex." Its four main program points are a free ballot, civil liberties, economic security and a decent living "for all."

Among the members of the state executive board of the Tennessee Commonwealth federation are Alton Lawrence and Joe Dobbs, both of Chattanooga.

Planks included in the organization's program are the repeal of the poll tax and a "completely adequate" system of pensions and aid to aged persons. The state group was organized in Nashville on Feb. 22 and 23 at a "Conference on Democracy."

At that conference the federation pased a resolution against the poll tax, asserting that "10,000,000 southerners today remain disfranchised in the land of our fathers, due to unjust, corrupt poll tax systems.

"The right of free ballot is the basis of democracy and a free people.

"The efforts of the overwhelming majority of the people of Tennessee to repeal the poll tax in the past session of legislature were defeated. This defeat was due to dictatorial control of the legislature by leaders of the Tennessee political machine now in power, chief benefactor of the poll tax system."

TENNESSEE
Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# TEN TENNESSEE COUNTIES END THEIR POLL TAX

APR 17 1941

*Special to The Southern News Almanac*

NASHVILLE.—Ten Tennessee counties have abolished the county poll tax, by action of the April sessions of their county courts. The Tennessee Commonwealth Federation is urging its members and friends to press for similar action in this (Davidson) county and in other counties of the state. The campaign will be carried to the July terms of the county courts, and the October terms, if necessary.

The counties which have wiped out the county tax entirely are Franklin, Anderson, Hardin, Wilson, Benton, Campbell, Claiborne, Knox, McMinn, and Cumberland. Hamblen county has reduced the tax to 50 cents. Rutherford and Lawrence counties have definitely postponed action until July.

At the time of formation of Tennessee Commonwealth Federation in February, this year, abolition of the poll tax was one of its chief announced objectives. At that time the people of Tennessee had just been denied state action by betrayal of the Crump machine in the state legislature. This closed the door to possible state action for two years.

### STATE TAX REMAINS

The poll tax in Tennessee is two dollars per year. One dollar is levied by the state, the other is levied by the county. Each quarter the county governing body, called the "county court" meets, and the Federation initiated a movement to besiege these county bodies with appeals to remove the county's part of the tax. Favorable action is expected in the overwhelming majority of the counties outside Shelby (Memphis) which is the stronghold of the Crump machine.

APR 17 1941

Political organization is going vigorously ahead to elect representatives to the next session of the state legislature who are pledged to actively work for state repeal.

Tennessee Commonwealth Federation has also endorsed the Geyer Federal Anti-Poll-Tax bill, now in committee in Congress. This bill proposes to prevent collection of poll tax in any elections where Federal officials are elected—congressmen, United States senators, president and vice-president.

News
Birmingham, Ala.

## Poll Tax Reform

APR 13 1941

The campaign for poll tax reform has been given a boost by the Quarterly County Courts in Franklin and in Anderson Counties, both of which have voted to eliminate the $1 poll tax as a prerequisite for voting in county elections. Payment of the $1 poll tax levied by the state will, of course, continue to be required. The action in Franklin and in Anderson Counties is important not only because the privilege of voting has been made more attractive, but also because of the effect it will have on other counties.

When a majority of Tennessee's 95 counties have eliminated the poll tax as prerequisite for voting, it will be hard for any governor to persuade their representatives in the General Assembly that the state should not provide the same relief. The leaders in Franklin and in Anderson deserve praise, for their counties will be affected financially. But instead of taking the position maintained in Carter County, where the poll tax is being retained because the county "needs revenue," Franklin and Anderson Counties are depriving themselves of poll tax dollars in order to extend the privilege of participating in elections.

APR 13 1941

Action by the individual counties dramatizes a situation which would not have arisen had Gov. Prentice Cooper fulfilled his campaign pledge to recommend repeal of the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting. Gov. Cooper stated that he would sign any repeal bill submitted to him, but he made it clear that he thought repeal unwise. The leadership in the campaign for repeal which the state government should have assumed is being taken up by political leaders in many of the counties. Hamilton County ought to join the parade of counties in which it can be so easily proved that real democracy is possible only when the largest possible number of citizens are permitted to vote and are encouraged to participate in elections. Repeal of the poll tax would bring much nearer that other reform—a permanent registration law—which has long been needed. The counties can show the way.—Chattanooga Times.

Christian Recorder
Philadelphia, Pa.

## TENNESSEE POLL TAX UPHELD

MAR 27 1941

CINCINNATI, March 8—An (AP)—Release says:—The 6th United States Circuit Court of Appeals upheld today the constitutionality of the Tennessee poll tax, affirming a United States District Court decision in the case of Henry C. Pirtle, coal dealer, of Grundy County, Tenn. Appellate Judge Xen Hicks, of Tennessee, who wrote the opinion, said in part: It is not to be doubted that the people of a state may, through a constitutional convention, prescribe the qualifications of voters and the limitation of the elective franchise."

Globe and
Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

# Leaders Of Both Races Give Views On Simmons' Talk

## Say People Here Are Smart Enough To Pick Officials Without Advice From Orators Imported From Other States

Roscoe Conklin Simmons, as in the past, may come to Nashville at frequent intervals to deliver patriotic, historical, interracial or other kinds of addresses (some say it is the same speech, regardless of the text) but never again, probably will he allow himself to be used as a magnet to draw a crowd in favor of a political candidate for a local office. This is assumed on belief that the noted Chicago orator has heard the repercussions from his appearance here last Sunday when he spoke to a large crowd at the Ryman Auditorium, many of whom had come to hear what he could tell Nashvillians about men running for various county offices, different from what the people here know about these fellow-citizens.

There is nothing that Roscoe Simmons enjoys more than good will, and the bauble of personal popularity. He loves to make such a speech in a town as will get him a "repeat order." He does not like to be brought to a city to boost the candidacy of a person or a cause which is not popular with the masses of his people, and is especially not desirous of offending any large class of white people.

That Mr. Simmons displeased a large section of the colored people here as well has offended many of the finest white people of the city by coming here under the auspices of an organization that was backing one of the candidates for Sheriff has been demonstrated by the thunder of protests that was heard following his address, and the one remark he made that placed him behind the candidacy of one of the candidates for Sheriff.

That one remark, which produced the thunder of protest against the Simmons speech, was when Simmons told his large crowd that it should accept the sponsors of the meeting as the political "leaders" of the Negro race here and to follow whatever advice these "leaders" gave with regard to whom Negro voters should support.

The rumor had gone the rounds, following its publication in the Nashville Globe, that Simmons was brought here by persons interested in getting Ivey Young nominated for Sheriff. Many of those who went to the meeting were there to hear Simmons employ his great eloquence in lauding Mr. Young. Others who usually go to hear Simmons speak, remained away from the meeting, not wishing to hear him try to tell local people about a candidate they knew more about than it was possible for Simmons to know.

Simmons was able to avoid engaging in any oratorical pyrotechnics for the man under whose auspices he had been brought to Nashville. But, of a necessity, he had to do something that would repay those who bore the heavy expense of bringing him to Nashville. He just indirectly endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Young by letting it be known that a slate would later be announced by the "leaders" and he wanted all his colored friends to adopt the slate and do their duty on election day.

The slate, when it finally was announced to an anxious public, proved to bear out accurately the forcast of the Nashville Globe. It was merely Mr. Ivey Young. The "leader" sprang their "dark horse" at a South Nashville meeting on Tuesday night. But instead of it arousing unity among colored citizens, it riled them. Attorney Walter S. Walker, dean of colored lawyers here, showed his regard for the candidacy of Mr. Young by promptly taking the floor at the mass meeting and making a convencing plea for the election of Sheriff Claude A. Briley, the candidate of a majority of colored citizens, whose election had been urged by the Nashville Globe from the beginning of the campaign.

As this is written, it is before the election, but there appeared to be no doubt of the fact that the Simmons speech for Ivy Young, though it endorsed Mr. Young only in an indirect way, did him more harm than good.

The effort to line up the colored voters by bringing in an outside speaker was assailed by Sam Jenkins, an official of the Sheriff's staff in a radio address Tuesday night. Mr. Jenkins, a trusted friend of the colored people of Nashville, made an effective plea to his friends to support Mr. Briley and praised the intelligence of Negro citizens here as being the kind that could appraise the best interests of this city and county without any outside help.

Several local organizations and leaders publicly expressed their disapproval of bringing in outside speakers to tell the people here how to vote on local men and issues. It was pointed out that the white people here do not bring in outside speakers of their race to meddle in local affairs and no Negro organizations should do so. National speakers should be brought here only to speak on national issues, when they come to speak in political campaigns, it was contended.

And not the least among those who protest against outside speakers in local campaigns are persons who work in elections. They think any money to be spent on local campaigns should be spent with Nashville people, holding it will do a candidate more good than any amount spent to hire an orator from Chicago or other places.

It cost plenty, it is rumored, to bring Mr. Simmons to Nashville. There is no definite information as to the amount of his expenses. But there is little doubt as to the identity of the "angel" who provided the expense money.

Nashville Tenn. Banner
September 1, 1941

# *Negroes Hear Simmons Urge Them To Vote*

Roscoe Conklin Simmons "of America," former Nashville Negro and now of Chicago, carried his oratory before approximately 2,000 Negroes assembled at a mass meeting of the Davidson County Negro Voters League Sunday afternoon at Ryman Auditorium, and urged them to vote in Thursday's Democratic Primary for the candidates the leaders of the league select.

Roscoe Conklin Grant, young Nashville Negro who is president of the league, announced after the meeting that a committee would select the candidates who are to be the league's choice and that they would be known before a Negro mass meeting and rally Tuesday night at the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Ward Community House, 1112 First Avenue, South.

Roscoe Simmons, clad in black alpaca coat and vest, black bow tie and gray morning trousers, brought a glittering style of speaking that has rarely been seen in Nashville in recent years. He was introduced by Dr. Henry Walker, Negro Legionnaire.

"We find ourselves face to face with the sternest test of all time," said Simmons, as he announced, "I am going to talk about defense." Here he diverged to say, "Roscoe talks about anything." He said that Booker T. Washington, in whose home he was reared, once said "I always chose my subject well and never got back to it. I see the papers said I was going to talk about politics."

Simmons talked some about politics and some about defense, but the greater part of his nearly two-hour address was devoted to the relationship of the American white man and the American Negro.

The keynote of his talk, perhaps, was his statement: "Nobody in the world is greater than the American white man, and why he is afraid of me I don't know."

Through the long, mellow afternoon he held his audience entranced. Spontaneous laughter from all over the auditorium answered his pointed, humorous remarks on the whites and the Negroes.

Among the candidates in Thursday's primary who were present were Bradley Walker, for chancellor of Part I, Chancery Court; W. D. (Bill) Dodson, for Part I General Sessions Court; W. B. (Sam) Hartman, for constable, First District; and candidates for magistrate Harry S. Hatcher, John Omohundro, Felix Z. Wilson, W. B. Marr and Harry Nelson. C. H. Rutherford, Sr., James Rutherford and Alf Rutherford, father and brothers of Charles H. Rutherford, Jr., candidate for nomination as judge of Part II, Circuit Court, were present.

Simmons said only three great men, "and by men I mean minds," ever sat in the White House. These, he said, were Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Jackson.

"I am in no contest with the American white man in this country," he declared. "I just want to get in . . . to see what you are doing. Have confidence in me, don't be scared of me. What you want me to do, I'll do; what you send me for, I'll bring back to you."

Citing the things great American white men have done for the Negro, Simmons said, "You are wasting time trying to shut your door before me; you are my open door.

"The American white man has got everything, but even the Lord couldn't handle him if he didn't have me around to worry him."

Buried beside Andrew Jackson, he said, is a Negro, Jackson's body servant. "In that great getting up morning," said Simmons, "they will rise, together, one in power and the other in humility.

"God made man; time and circumstance made race."

Simmons said Negroes should "let white people know that when they desire to do the great thing, they can depend on us."

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in his opinion is the greatest woman in the world, suggested in her column that Negroes might be exempt from military service, Simmons said, adding that he wrote Mrs. Roosevelt: "Exempt from what?" He told of Negroes' heroic service in the past and said, "Exempt? I'm a born soldier."

He said that as a boy in Nashville he carried a BANNER route.

Americans, Simmons said, should not permit a single newspaper to be printed in this country except in the English language. "The man on the streetcar might have one in a foreign language and I couldn't read it," he said. "Such papers might say bad things about Roosevelt," he added.

Here Simmons suggested that there be one law for all the people, one language, and one thought.

"There never was a man like Hitler," he said. "You have challenged the greatest single force since Hannibal and Alexander.

"Roosevelt is not my President by my vote," said Simmons, who is a Republican leader. "But," he added, "he is my President. Whoever offends him offends me. My politics stop at the ocean's edge.

Declaring that he was not now a man of peace and quoting the Bible, Simmons said, "Let the white people fight this thing out and I'll help them.

"I'll be out there, but not way out," he said, and the crowd laughed.

"The Lord put me in the Republican Party, and I just stayed there," said Simmons, adding that he knew a "lot of first class Democrats and a lot of second class Republicans." America, however, is the "only nation of men in the world," he said.

When Simmons said he had spoken to the Negro Voters League every year since its birth, Grant handed him what appeared to be an election circular. Simmons looked at it and said, "It says here something about lynching." Almost inaudibly, he repeated the word several times.

"Lynching," he declared, "has never harmed us—we have a man to spare now and then. But lynching has undone the power of the American white man.

Simmons asked the question, s a "place of justice," as he dwelt of laughter, and spellbound amaze- "Who are the best men?" in re- briefly on the attorney-general's ment. His closing sentence was: ferring to the candidates. The duties. "And now, beloved, with your best, he said, are "those who these Striding about the platform of kind permission, I bid you adieu.' men (the Voters League officers) he venerable auditorium, using an tell you. They'll tell you what man amazing repertoire of gestures, ad- to send to Congress, what man to dressing his remarks to the plat- elect sheriff." form crowd behind him, the crowd He said the prosecutor's office o the sides and in front, Simmons evoked rounds of applause, bursts

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

# POLL TAX REPEALISTS OPEN ASSEMBLY WITH EIGHT-BILL OFFENSIVE

## Action Follows Swiftly After Organization Of The Legislature

## WOULD ABOLISH STATUTE

## Also Would End Levy As Requirement For Voting

## MAXWELL IS RE-ELECTED

### O'Dell To Continue As Presiding Officer In House—Joint Session To Hear Cooper's Message Today

JAN 7 1941

By PAUL MORRIS

From The Commercial Appeal
Nashville Bureau

NASHVILLE, Jan. 6.—Poll tax repealists got in their opening licks as soon as formalities were cleared out and the session of the Seventy-second Tennessee General Assembly got under way Monday.

In the Senate four repeal bills and one measure to replace funds now provided by the poll tax were introduced, and over in the House four repeal bills found their way into the hopper.

**Organization Completed**

Introduction of the bills seeking to repeal the age old poll tax as a requirement to voting followed swiftly upon the organization of both Houses of the Assembly and the election of an administration slate of legislative officials.

In the Senate, Weldon B. White of Davidson tossed in the four repeal bills, and accompanied them with the companion measure to provide replacement of funds now brought in by the poll tax, which go to the school system of the state.

Three of the House bills were sponsored by Frank Hall of Dickson County and James Cummings of Cannon County. They were companion bills to the White measures in the Senate. The fourth measure was sponsored by M. E. Tipton of Washington County and was signed by the entire Republican delegation in the lower House.

Prior to the opening of the session at noon both the Senate and House held their caucuses and nominated candidates for speakers, clerks, assistant clerks, and chief engrossing clerks.

Shortly after the two houses had been called into regular session at 12 o'clock and the members had been sworn in, the formal election of the legislative officers was carried out.

**Maxwell Re-elected**

Blan Maxwell of Memphis was re-elected Speaker of the Senate and pledged "that all members of this body will be treated just as I would expect to be treated."

Over in the House, John Ed O'Dell of Bristol was renamed as the presiding officer. Other officers elected included:

In the Senate—B. B. Gullett of Nashville, chief clerk; Roy C. Melton of Camden, assistant clerk; Mrs. Mary C. Cummings, chief engrossing clerk; Mrs. William Litchford, assistant chief engrossing clerk.

JAN 7 1941

In the House—G. Edward Friar was named chief clerk; Thomas O. H. Smith of Nashville, assistant chief clerk, and Miss Jim McEwen of Nashville, chief engrossing clerk.

Judge R. B. C. Howell, recently appointed to the State Court of Appeals, administered the oath to members of the House, while Judge D. W. DeHaven of the Supreme Court administered the oath to the senators.

Democratic members of the two houses will hold a joint caucus at 10 o'clock Tuesday morning to nominate candidates for the three constitutional offices, and at the same hour on Wednesday the two houses will meet jointly to go through the formality of electing these officials.

John Harton of Tullahoma will be re-elected as state treasurer, Bob Lowe of Cookeville will be renamed as comptroller and Joe C. Carr of Nashville is to be elected secretary of state to replace A. B. Broadbent of Clarksville.

**Hear Cooper Today**

Following the Democratic caucus Tuesday morning, both houses will meet in joint session in the House chamber at 11 o'clock to hear the address of Governor Cooper, at which time the chief executive will present his program to the lawmakers.

JAN 7 1941

Both houses adjourned immediately after the formalities of organization were out of the way Monday, until 11 o'clock Tuesday.

At the brief opening session, 15 bills were introduced in the Senate, and 10 were presented in the House.

Three of the poll tax repeal bills sponsored by Senator White of Nashville provide for repealing the tax as a prerequisite to voting in the primary, the general election and also repeals the general poll tax statute. Another repeal measure does away with the $1 poll tax levy for school purposes, and provides for registration by voters as a prerequisite to voting.

His companion measure to the repeal bills levies a 7-cent per gallon tax on soft drinks, providing that ths tax shall be divided between replacing the poll tax funds, providing money for the old age pension fund, provding funds for the teachers' bonus fund, and giving aid to the county highway funds. The bill would require all firms bottling, manufacturing or storing soft drinks to pay the 7 cents per gallon tax.

The Department of Finance and Taxation would be charged with the collection of the tax, and 4 per cent of the revenue would be earmarked to cover the cost of collection. The remainder of the tax would be divided as follows: Two cents to the poll tax replacement fund; 2 cents to the old age assistance fund; 2 cents to the school teachers' bonus fund; and 1 cent to be distributed among the counties for their county highway funds.

**House Repealers**

The three repeal measures sponsored by Hall and Cummings in the House repealed the poll tax as a voting requirement in the primary and general elections, as well as abolishing the general poll tax statute.

The repealer offered by the Republican delegation in the House would do away with the poll tax by making 22 years maximum age limit for voting without payment of the tax rather than the present maximum age limit of 50.

The administration sponsored resolution to limit the session to 50 days—which Governor Cooper had announced was to be introduced "early in the session"—failed to put in its appearance Monday. Administration leaders in both houses declared they did not know whether the resolution would come in Tuesday. However, several legislators came to the opening session primed to wage war on the proposal, among them being Frank Hall of Dickson and J. B. Ragon of Chattanooga, administration floor leader in the 1939 session.

The session also got under way without any designation by the administration floor leaders in the two houses.

According to reliable reports, the House place has been offered again to Mr. Ragon, but he has been withholding a decision on its acceptance.

The name of Senator Roy Hickerson of Winchester continued to figure prominently in connection with the leadership in the Senate.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

# Governor's Stand On Poll Tax Law Surprises No One

JAN 12 1941

## Favored Repeal In 1939, But Now Leaves It Up To Legislature

JAN 12 1941

By PAUL MORRIS

NASHVILLE, Jan. 8.—Governor Cooper's declaration that repeal of the poll tax is a "matter for the discretion of the Legislature" admittedly came as no surprise to the majority of the members of the Seventy-second General Assembly. But it did strengthen the belief that the administration intends to offer nothing stronger than "lip service"—if that—to the repeal of the tax as a prerequisite to voting.

When Governor Cooper pointed to his 1939 stand, and followed that up with his references to the matter in a series of legislative conferences, the Chief Executive failed to remove the cloud of doubt from many people's minds as to his real stand on the issue.

**For Repeal In 1939**

In his 1939 message to the General Assembly he recommended that the poll tax be repealed as a requirement to voting in the primaries and suggested a Constitutional Amendment to remove the poll tax requirement for voting in the general elections. However, the poll tax repeal efforts died abornin', so to speak, in that session. More recently, the Governor has been quoted by numerous Legislators, who attended the pre-session conferences, as expressing grave doubts on the feasibility and advisibility of repealing the poll tax, despite the fact that he is on record and his party is on record in favor of abolition.

The conflicting statements have not given any gratification or encouragement to those who have been so vociferously thumping the tub throughout the width and breadth of the state in favor of repeal. Likewise, they have failed to put the Governor firmly and publicly on the record as to his position on the vital issue as it now confronts the current Legislative session.

JAN 12 1941

**Truck-Rail Fight Again**

The current session of the Legislature seemingly is not destined to get by without the usual "railroad-truck" fight over the load limits for trucks.

Reliable sources declare that an effort is soon to be made to increase the maximum loads trucks may carry from 24,000 pounds to 34,000 pounds. These sources also say that the proposal will have the support of the administration.

Basis of the request for the increased load, according to those claiming to be informed, is that many of Tennessee's neighboring states permit heavier than 24,000 pound loads, thereby necessitating that trucks unload part of their cargoes when they enter this state. Such a situation, it is contended, constitute a "trade barrier," between the states, and th ore should be removed.

Some of the administration supporters reportedly have already informed the Governor that they cannot go along on the proposal, and will fight it when it comes to the floor.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

# PASTORS TAKE STAND FOR POLL TAX REPEAL

## Ministerial Association Splits On Whether Question Is Moral Issue

JAN 7 1941

The Memphis Ministerial Association yesterday indorsed repeal of the Tennessee poll tax after a spirited discussion.

The resolution, which was opposed on the grounds that "it involved politics and was not a moral issue," was finally adopted, 9 to 5.

**Democratic Struggle**

Dr. J. Ralph Roberts introduced the resolution reading as follows:

"Inasmuch as there is a world-

wide death struggle for a greater democratic latitude, and an encouragement to all classes to avail themselves of the democratic exercise of their franchise, and . . .

"Whereas Tennessee is one of only eight states still holding on to the restrictive system of poll taxes, be it hereby made known to the Tennessee State Legislature and the Hon. Gov. Prentice Cooper, in whom we have the greatest confidence, that we shall feel deeply disappointed if this state does not join the other 40 states in their march toward a greater freedom of franchise by repealing the present poll Tax Law.'

**Mr. Clark Protests**

First to protest against adoption was the Rev. Robert A. Clark, who said, "I do not think this body should pass resolutions regarding political matters, especially when there is no moral issue involved."

"If disfranchisement of 75 per cent of ou rpeople isn't a moral issue, then what in the name of God is?" the Rev. Sam A. Howie quickly retorted.

JAN 7 1941

The Rev. Marshall Wingfield agreed with Dr. Howie, saying "I am as much opposed to any union of church and state as anyone here but it has always been the policy of this association to speak on moral issues and this certainly is one. We spent considerable time and effort fighting racing in Arkansas, why shouldn't we speak on this issue that involves our own state?"

"Tennessee stays in the hills on too many of these issues," Dr. Roberts declared in backing up his resolution. "The poor have no voice and it is up to the church to petition for them. That has been our right since the constitution was founded. I ask you now to exercise your religious and patriotic franchise."

Dr. H. T. Wood was among those objecting to the resolution and several members declined to vote.

Another resolution, introduced by Dr. Howie, asking the association to appoint a committee to provide Bible teachers for a group of negro religious leaders under sponsorship of the negro Y.M.C.A., was also adopted.

Every opposition against Christianity in China has ceased, Dr. C. E. Burch, a missionary in China for 34 years, told the ministers. "Out of the war has come a great advance of the work of the churches," he said. "Through our efforts on behalf of war refugees, the Church of Christ, as all Protestant churches are known in China, has taught the people that we not only preach the gospel but live it, too." More people have been baptized in the last year than in the preceding three years, he said. Dr. V. E. Boston presided at the meeting at the Y.M.C.A.

Times-Picayune
New Orleans, La.

# MARKED BALLOTS TO CHECK VOTER, ASSERTS WITNESS

## Former Election Official Testifies in Probe of Park Ballots

JAN 15 1941

(The Associated Press)

Washington, Jan. 14.—A former Tennessee election official told a Senate subcommittee Monday that he had smeared the ballots of Great Smoky Mountain Park officials in 1936 to identify them to "satisfy my own curiosity" as to how they voted.

The witness, J. Mayes, formerly with the United States public roads bureau at Gatlinburg, Tenn., and now stationed in North Carolina, when asked whether this was in conflict with the law concerning ballot secrecy, expressed belief he had "violated the spirit of the law."

JAN 15 1941

One of the ballots was that of Superintendent J. Ross Eakin of the Smoky Mountain Park, accused by Senator McKellar, Democrat, Tennessee, of having "grossly mismanaged" the affairs of the park. The senator added also that Eakin, whom he described as a Republican from West Virginia, saw to it that most of the men in his organization were Republicans.

Mayes said it was simply curiosity over whether Eakin and some of his subordinates in the park service would vote for President Roosevelt in the 1936 election that led him to smear their ballots with ink to identify them. Mayes was an election officer at the Gatlinburg precinct.

After all the votes were counted, he said, he kept those of Eakin, Robert White, park engineer, and Thomas J. Rhea, Eakin's chief clerk, and learned that all three voted for Alf Landon, as well as for Representative Reece, Republican, Tennessee.

Eakin inquired how he happened to make three different affidavits concerning the incident, and Mayes said Elias Dresler, an interior department investigator, "made several errors" in writing one of the affidavits which he signed. He said he signed one because Dresler was "very overbearing."

McKellar was the first witness at the hearing called on his resolution demanding an investigation of Eakin's management of the park. The resolution also directed an inquiry into the ballot-smearing incident. Secretary Ickes repeatedly has refused McKellar's demand for Eakin's removal.

McKellar introduced an audit of the park's affairs made by an interior department auditor in 1936-37. He said it revealed "complete disregard" of regulations covering the purchase of supplies, failure to include substantiating papers for items paid for, and other irregularities, most of which were blamed on a suspended clerk.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

**MUST PROTECT BALLOT**

To The Commercial Appeal:

Your editorial, "Safeguards For Ballots," as of Sunday, Jan. 5, should command the attention and indorsement of all Commercial Appeal readers who desire honest and free elections.

Personally, I believe the forced payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite to voting is a statutory invasion of the civil rights and liberties of any American citizen.

The poll tax receipt has, in many sections and in many instances, become an instrument of evil and a medium of barter by which unscrupulous politicians are permitted to concentrate large blocks of votes for or against a particular candidate or issue in any and all types of elections.

As a matter of common justice to all voting classes, poll taxes should be repealed. A common sense system for registration of voters should follow. Known crooks, illiterates and moral bankrupts should be excluded from registration and voting privileges. Stiff legal penalties should be provided and applied in all cases of election frauds. Election commissioners and officers should be appointed on a basis of fitness and purpose to serve honestly and fairly.

Without enumerating a long list of election bad practices, such practices are well known to every member of the Tennessee Legislature whose moral duty it is to correct. It seems absurd that in a supposedly free democracy it should become necessary to debate the question of fair and honorable election processes.

D. L. THOMASON.

Covington, Tenn.

JAN 16 1941

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

## Poll Tax Repeal

Mere repeal of the requirements for paying poll tax as a prerequisite for voting in Tennessee is too little or too much, depending on how you look at it. The poll tax is a definite part of a system designed to safeguard the use of the ballot, and its removal without compensating protections being added should not be considered by this or any other Legislature. In other words, if the poll tax is eliminated it should be as only one item in a carefully planned program of improving the quality as well as the quantity of voters.

JAN 8 - 194

As matters stand, Tennessee ordinarily polls about one-third of the persons of voting age in the state. It is not established that the poll tax is solely responsible for the failure of so many people to vote, but it does deter a certain number. To remove it would, therefore, automatically increase the number of qualified voters subject to efforts at manipulation by machine politicians. In the case of the purchasable vote, for instance, it would mean the necessity of buying the vote alone, not the poll tax and the vote. In any case freedom from the necessity of having a poll tax receipt would augment the possibilities for shenanigans and chicanery unless other safeguards are provided.

If the removal of the poll tax requirement is constitutional, and a sound body of thought exists that it is not, the tightest sort of system of permanent registration should be put into effect as the poll tax is taken away. The Legislature should also give solemn thought to any other fair and feasible means of safeguarding the use of the ballot and seeing to it that those who are empowered to vote are likewise satisfactorily responsible. It is a mistake to think that bestowal of any right or privilege is any automatic guarantee that it will be properly valued and used.

There are many respects in which the election laws of Tennessee need amendment, and poll tax repeal should be co-ordinated with them if it be undertaken.

News
Birmingham, Ala.

## Poll Tax Reform

APR 1 3 1941

The campaign for poll tax reform has been given a boost by the Quarterly County Courts in Franklin and in Anderson Counties, both of which have voted to eliminate the $1 poll tax as a prerequisite for voting in county elections. Payment of the $1 poll tax levied by the state will, of course, continue to be required. The action in Franklin and in Anderson Counties is important not only because the privilege of voting has been made more attractive, but also because of the effect it will have on other counties.

When a majority of Tennessee's 95 counties have eliminated the poll tax as prerequisite for voting, it will be hard for any governor to persuade their representatives in the General Assembly that the state should not provide the same relief. The leaders in Franklin and in Anderson deserve praise, for their counties will be affected financially. But instead of taking the position maintained in Carter County, where the poll tax is being retained because the county "needs revenue," Franklin and Anderson Counties are depriving themselves of poll tax dollars in order to extend the privilege of participating in elections.

APR 1 3 1941

Action by the individual counties dramatizes a situation which would not have arisen had Gov. Prentice Cooper fulfilled his campaign pledge to recommend repeal of the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting. Gov. Cooper stated that he would sign any repeal bill submitted to him, but he made it clear that he thought repeal unwise. The leadership in the campaign for repeal which the state government should have assumed is being taken up by political leaders in many of the counties. Hamilton County ought to join the parade of counties in which it can be so easily proved that real democracy is possible only when the largest possible number of citizens are permitted to vote and are encouraged to participate in elections. Repeal of the poll tax would bring much nearer that other reform—a permanent registration law—which has long been needed. The counties can show the way.—Chattanooga Times.

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# Tennessee Folks Knee Deep In Drive For Democracy

MAR 1 31941

NASHVILLE. — About 110 years ago Andrew Jackson began a ride from here to Washington that was destined to restore a large measure of democracy to plain Americans and this week a group of progressive Tennessee plain folks were knee deep in another drive to recapture democracy for Tennessee.

The Tennessee Commonwealth Federation, which came into being less than a month ago as a direct result of popular wrath at the conspiracy of Gov. Prentice Cooper and Crump political machine of Memphis to sidetrack elementary popular government, has sent out a statement of its aims and an appeal for support destined to reach 600 key people throughout the state immediately—eventually many hundreds more.

MAR 1 31941

Already active in leading and guiding its work are coal miners, farmers, railroad brotherhood leaders, American Federation of Labor representatives and key CIO leaders in the state. But in addition to these representatives of organizations there are scores of housewives, independent tradesmen and small businessmen who also feel that they have a particular stake in saving majority government in this poll tax state.

The Federation sprang to life as a sudden protest against the last session of the Tennessee legislature which beat down popular demands to repeal the state's poll tax law and at the same time slashed badly needed common school funds and enacted a whole stack of legislation dictated by the Crump-Cooper combine, including such thinly disguised anti-labor laws as an "anti-sabotage" bill and a measure creating a state "Home Guard."

The follow-up letter on the conference, which was held Feb. 22-23, and which will reach at least 600 people whose support for popular democratic rule is already counted upon, declares:

**"United action is necessary if majority rule is to be restored to the people of Tennessee. That, in a sentence, was the conclusion of the conference which set up as its permanent organization the Tennessee Commonwealth Federation. Our program is for repeal of the poll tax, to maintain and extend our civil rights and the rights of labor."**

The letter is signed by Mrs. Ruth Cutler, secretary of the Commonwealth Federation, and invites each of the 600 to "act as a center for a membership campaign in your community."

MAR 1 31941

Thus in the letters being sent throughout the state a basis was being laid for people to "get together" in small but growing local groups and eventually to form county and local organizations to keep the issue of popular democracy alive at the point of its origin—the folks back home.

The need for just this kind of political action was especially keen in Tennessee whose governor was a one-time supporter of many of the progressive measures the Commonwealth Federation itself stands for, until the Crump-McKellar machine no longer needed to keep up every vague progressive pretense.

Speakers at the conference pointed out that many legislators—perhaps even a majority of them—had themselves been elected on a basis of the same sort of promises. Therefore the conference resolved to take the issue directly back to the people who elected both Cooper and the legislators.

The call to the conference which brought nearly 300 people together here to launch the Commonwealth Federation expressed the danger to popular government in Tennessee thus:

**"The issue confronting us now is the demand of selfish interests in Tennessee and throughout the nation that sacred rights guaranteed by both state and federal constitutions and by the Bill of Rights be sacrificed in the name of national defense.**

**"We find these interests and their representatives seeking to hide behind the flag. With patriotic fervor they are demanding that the rights of the ordinary citizens be so restricted and circumscribed that he would be deprived of those very constitutional and democratic rights for which his country may call upon him to lay down his life. . .**

MAR 1 31941

It was with this same brand of phony "patriotic fervor" that Cooper crammed through the legislature the anti-labor "home guard" bill and the so-called anti-sabotage law while at the same time slashing appropriations for schools to below what both educators and the people feel is a decent operating minimum. In addition to this, the school measure gives the governor a hitherto unheard of power—the right to impound school funds without any legislative check.

What infuriated organized labor was the fact that the governor refused to even confer with a labor delegation which called upon him to take up these matters so vitally important to labor and all the plain people of Tennessee.

But the crowning insult to the people was the refusal of the legislature to act on repeal of the poll tax as a requirement for voting in spite of the fact that Governor Cooper had pledged himself to work for the repeal of the poll tax. It was upon this issue that the presence of Crump—always a sinister figure behind the scenes in this state—was felt strongest in the legislature. The word passed down that "Ed Crump had said" that there would be no poll tax repeal. The governor, who is no longer a foe of Crump, knuckled under and the legislature adjourned to leave a record as reactionary as any in many years.

But it also did the thing it least expected to do—it plowed the ground for the Tennessee Commonwealth Federation to bring to life popular and independent political expression, real grass roots protest which may in the end upset the Crump-Cooper combine to drive democracy out of Tennessee.

*TENNESSEE READERS: If you want to know more about the Tennessee Commonwealth Federation, then it wants to know about you too! Write to Tennessee Commonwealth Federation, 1018 Cotton States Building, Nashville. A folder setting out its aims and membership cards for your neighbors will be sent to you.*

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

## Ask Repeal Of County Poll Tax

APR 3 - 1941

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—A resolution calling for the removal of the $1 poll tax imposed by the county will be presented before the Davidson County Court at its quarterly session next Monday, it was announced yesterday.

Jordan Stokes, III, president of the Nashville Civic Affairs Forum, announced that the forum had prepared the resolution, which, he said, is "certain to be introduced with an awfully good chance of passing."

APR 3 - 1941

If the resolution is adopted, only payment of the $1 state poll tax would be left as a prerequisite for voting in the county.

Similar proposals will be made in other Tennessee counties by the Tennessee Commonwealth Federation, the organization recently formed by the people of Tennessee to fight for democracy in the state.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

## MARSHALL; LAWRENCE ABOLISH POLL TAXES

### 26 Tennessee Counties Now Have Taken Action

By The Associated Press

OCT 1 0 1941

Marshall and Lawrence Counties in Middle Tennessee repealed their share of the state poll tax.

While the county courts sitting at Lewisburg and Lawrenceburg eliminated $1 from the $2 levy as a requirement for voting, two other midstate counties decided on the status quo.

Smith County Court adopted a resolution favoring maintenance of the county's share of the tax and Lewis County magistrates tabled a repeal move after court members asked more time to study the tax.

Of the state's 95 counties, 26 to date have repealed their full $1 part of the tax.

In addition, Hamblen County in East Tennessee has reduced its levy to 50 cents and White County earlier this year voted to abolish the $1 tax as a requirement for voting in primaries, but left it for general elections.

### Poll Tax Upheld By Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14.—(UP)—The Supreme Court Monday upheld a United States Circuit Court ruling sustaining constitutionality of the $1-a-year poll tax as it applies to voting in Congressional elections in Tennessee.

The court gave no opinion Monday, but the action appeared to end a long-standing controversy over legality of the levies which predominate in Southern states. The question was decided in a formal opinion of the court in 1937 in which the justices unanimously upheld a Georgia poll tax similar to that in effect in Tennessee.

The Circuit Court treated the levy as a per capita tax having no relation to the voting franchise.

OCT 1 5 1941

Southern News
Almanac
Birmingham, Ala.

# TCF WILL FIGHT POLL TAX IN COUNTY COURTS

MAR 27 1941

## Tennessee Federation Launches Organization Drive Over State

NASHVILLE.—The Tennessee Commonwealth Federation this week opened up the fight for poll tax repeal on a new front and at the same time mapped a program of organization to carry the people's fight to "restore majority rule in Tennessee" to every shop, union hall and farmers' meeting place in the state.

At its first board meeting last Saturday the TCF enthusiastically approved the plan of its president, Hollis V. Reid of Memphis, to petition all county courts in the state to repeal the county's portion of the tax at their April meetings. In Tennessee the county courts, composed of all elected magistrates in the county, constitute the county law making bodies, and as such have the authority to repeal all but the state's portion of the tax, which is 50 cents.

MAR 27 1941

### OTHERS INTERESTED

Meanwhile, as the board members of the organization which seeks to create independent political action to break Tennessee's notorious boss rule, were cheered by reports that people of other states were already seeking to follow the example of the TCF.

Mrs. Ruth Cutler, secretary of the TCF, read letters from Beaumont, Tex., and Winston-Salem, N. C., from people who told how they face similar situations of boss rule and see in the TCF a hint of how they may regain control of the peoples institutions in their own states. Both correspondents asked full particulars on how the TCF was formed and for suggestions on how they might go about organizing similar mofes in their states.

MAR 27 1941

### GROUPS TO JOIN

The board meeting also worked out plans for all labor and progressive farm groups to affiliate with the TCF collectively and invited organizations interested to communicate with it. (The address of the TCF is 1018 Cotton States Building, Nashville).

The TCF was formed at a meeting of labor and farm people here on Feb. 20. It was the outgrowth of popular indignation at the action of the last session of the Tennesese legislature in which the Crump-machine - dominated Gov. Prentice Cooper defaulted on his pledge to work for Poll Tax repeal, and instead crammed through a batch of anti-labor bills, slashed school funds and slapped the people around generally.

Chattanooga, Tenn., Daily Times
March 24, 1941

## A NEW COMMISSIONER

If rumors which persist in Nashville these days are true, and Commissioner Andrew T. Taylor is, in fact, planning to resign from the Department of Institutions, the Cooper administration is facing a major problem. If Governor Cooper and his principal advisers understand this, the appointment of a new head to this important department will be no mere question of patronage. If it is made so, the State will be the sufferer.

The Department of Institutions in any State is an important factor in its social life. This is particularly true in Tennessee because it was in this department that Governor Cooper started to take his best steps toward a brilliant record, and it was here that the Governor wavered because of pressure from men high in his confidence.

Tennessee was shocked when Mr. Cooper failed to take a stand for poll tax repeal after his published position on that question two years ago. But if any serious study had been made of the occurrences in the field of institutional reform, the outcome of the poll tax fight would not have been unexpected. As a matter of fact, one might say that the fate of poll tax repeal could have been read in the prior failure of "courts of mercy" at the penitentiary, and self-government in the reformatories; in no improvement in a distressing situation among Negro children at Pikeville, in the lack of a firm hand in remedying conditions at the State hospitals. Only a strong administration, indifferent to ordinary politicians, would have pushed these measures among institutions; and only a strong administration would have backed the fight for poll tax repeal.

In view of these considerations, a new appointment in the Department of Institutions becomes another test for a political machine which has grown a little too topheavy and complacent. If a new commissioner turns out to be merely a skillful dispenser of patronage, that would be a pity. A new head of the Department of Institutions should, by all means, be a man positive enough and determined enough to defy political pressure along many lines. Governor Cooper still has a chance to redeem his administration from a record of mere political "regularity."

Specifically, if Tennessee must have a new commissioner, it needs one who will not look upon the institutions of the State as convenient dumping grounds for the kinsmen of political leaders when appointments are to be made for "guards" and "attendants." The building program which has been so widely advertised can be just so much waste money. The new commissioner should not feel that his whole duty has been performed when he superintends the construction of new buildings, nor that a handsome building on the grounds of an institution is sufficient answer to any question as to what may be going on inside.

The new commissioner should be a man strong enough to push rehabilitation work in the penal institutions, to make thoroughgoing reforms in State hospitals, to move the Negro boys' school now at Pikeville to a city like Chattanooga where real reform work can be done. That will require strength because all such measures must be taken over the protest of certain political factions, and of a certain curious element in the population that opposes any gesture toward humanity and mercy in regard to unfortunates and delinquents.

What is said here applies equally to the situation if Commissioner Taylor continues in office. He is a young man for that important post, but has shown possibilities of becoming one of the best men in the Governor's cabinet. With proper backing from the administration, Mr. Taylor might well have led the way to the reforms indicated here. One wonders whether proper encouragement would not have made this position attractive enough to hold a man who had good plans on his own account for the State institutions.

Knoxville Tenn., Journal
November 6, 1941

## Writer Says Negro Has Little To Choose Among Candidates

Editor of The Knoxville Journal:

Every two years you hear a lot about the shortcomings of the officials "in," launched by the would-be officials "out." These complaints raise various issues among the voting public, who will say by the ballots who shall steer the municipal affairs for the ensuing two years. I am not so much interested in the personnel of the present administration, nor am I so much interested in the personnel which will be elected. The question that presents itself to me is what will be the verdict two years hence. I have naught to say about the fine men who represent our city in the council chambers, neither have I anything to register against some of the outstanding public spirited candidates of the "Anti." This is matter to be fought out by the white voters who expect something tangible, and the white candidates who will be seated around the council table.

The Negro voter has little hope of being considered in any important matter pertaining to the city. He has been fed the same old stale political food for many years with little or no results. There is no reason for him to jump sommersaults and take the jitters to the extent that he will join in pouring embittered wrath or abuse upon any candidate, because it may turn out to be a question of good Lord and good devil for the reason he can't say into whose hands he is going to fall.

Whatever may be the results, if I only knew the candidate who believed equal administration of the affairs of this city towards all men, irrespective of color, or if I only knew who would see that the thoroughfares where Negroes live are improved, equal accomodations in schools, in protection of the law and provide adequate sanitary accomodations, that candidate would get my support no matter to what division he belongs.

Now with regard to the enforcement of law I am in full cooperation. I shall not vote against any man or set of men because of the selection of the director of public safety. I have nothing of unkind spirit to say about the police department nor Mr. Lynn Bomar. I think he is an officer well qualified for the position he holds. I am not interested in city automobile taxes or meters. I am interested in the program and the attitude which they will have towards the Negro as a citizen.

JOHN A. HUFF.
101½ West Vine Avenue.

52e-1941

TEXAS

The Northwest Enterprise
Seattle, Washington

# Open Fight on Tex. 'White Prim.' Law

JAN 24 1941

Houston, Tex.—The Texas state conference of NAACP branches in cooperation with the association's national office. has renewed its fight to break the "White primary" of this state.

A complaint was filed here Tuesday January 15 in the United States District Court by Sidney Hasgett, a qualified Negro who was denied the right to vote in the Democratic primary last year. The action was brought against Theodore Werner and John H. Blackburn, Judges of the Primary elections, and seeks $5,000 actual damages and $5,000 punitive damages for violation of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution and federal laws passed pursuant to the amendment.

JAN 24 1941

Hasgett, a qualified voter of the 19th precinct in Houston, presented himself at the polls on August 24, 1940 with his poll tax receipt, and requested the right to vote in the Democratic primary. This was denied him on the grounds that he was a Negro. Hasget sought the assistance of the NAACP. The Texas state conference of NAACP branches, with the cooperation of the association's national office, began work on the case. W. J. Durham of Sherman Texas, has been retained as local special counsel. Mr. Durham requested the cooper-

New York Age
New York, N. Y.

# Fight Texas White Primary Law

JAN 25 1941

HOUSTON, Tex.—The Texas state conference of N.A.A.C.P. branches in cooperation with the association's national office, has renewed its fight to break the "White Primary" of this state.

A complaint was filed here on Tuesday, January 15, in the United States District Court by Sidney Hasgett, a qualified Negro who was denied the right to vote in the Democratic primary last year. The action was brought against Theodore Werner and John H. Blackburn, Judges of the Primary elections, and seeks $5,000 actual damages and $5,000 punitive damages for violation of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution and federal laws passed pursuant to the Amendment.

Hasgett, a qualified voter of the 19th precinct in Houston, presented himself at the polls on August 24, 1940, with poll tax receipt, and requested the right to vote in the Democratic primary. This was denied him on the grounds that he was a Negro. Hasgett sought the assistance of N.A.A.C.P.

The Texas state conference of NAACP branches, with the cooperation of the association's national office, began work on the case. W. J. Durham of Sherman, Texas, has been retained as local counsel. Mr. Durham requests the cooperation of Thurgood Marshall, special counsel; William H. Hastie, Leon A. Ransom, James N. Nabrit and W. Robert Ming jr., members of the NAACP national legal committee.

The Texas State Conference of N.A.A.C.P. branches is raising a defense fund of $8,000 for the case.

Washington Tribune
Washington, D. C.

# Open Fight on Texas "White Primary" Law

FEB 1 1941

HOUSTON, Texas.—The Texas State Conference of NAACP branches in cooperation with the association's national office, has renewed its fight to break the "White Primary" of this State.

A complaint was filed here, Tuesday, January 15, in the United States District Court by Sidney Hasgett, a qualified Negro who was denied the right to vote in the Democratic primary last year. The action was brought against Theodore Werner and John H. Blackburn, Judges of Primary elections, and seeks $5,000 actual damages and $5,000 punitive damages for violation of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution and federal laws passed pursuant to the amendment.

Hasgett, a qualified voter of the 19th precinct in Houston, Texas, presented himself at the polls on August 24, 1940 with his poll tax receipt and requested the right to vote in the Democractic primary. This was denied him on the grounds that he was a Negro. Hasgett, sought the assistance of the NAACP. The Texas State conferences of NAACP branches, with the cooperation of the association's national office, began work on the case.

1941

W. J. Durham of Sherman, Texas, has been retained as local counsel. Mr. Durham requested the cooperation of Thurgood Marshall, special counsel; William H. Hastie, Leon A. Ransom, James N. Nabrit, and W. Robert Ming, Jr., members of the NAACP national legal committee. The Texas State Conference of NAACP branches is raising a defense fund of $8,000 for the case.

Amsterdam News
New York, N. Y.

# Fight on 'White Primary' Law in Texas Launched

JAN 25 1941

HOUSTON, Texas—The Texas state conference of N.A.A.C.P. branches in co-operation with the association's national office, has renewed its fight to break the "White Primary" of this state.

A complaint was filed here last week in the United States District Court by Sidney Hasgett, a qualified Negro, who was denied the right to vote in the Democratic primary last year. The action was brought against Theodore Werner and John H. Blackburn, Judges of the Primary elections, and seeks $5,000 actual damages and $5,000 punitive damages for violation of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution and federal laws passed pursuant to the amendment.

Hasgett, a qualified voter of the 19th precinct in Houston, presented himself at the polls on August 24, 1940, with his poll tax receipt, and requested the right to vote in the Democratic primary. This was denied him on the grounds that he was a Negro. Hasgett sought the assistance of the N.A.A.C.P.

The Texas state conference of N.A.A.C.P. branches, with the co-operation of the association's national office, began work on the case. W. J. Durham of Sherman, Texas, has been retained as local counsel. Mr. Durham requested the co-operation of Thurgood Marshall, special counsel; William H. Hastie, Leon A. Ransom, James N. Nabrit and W. Robert Ming, Jr., members of the N.A.A.C.P. national legal committee. The Texas State Conference of NAACP branches is raising a defense fund of $8,000 for the case.

Washington Tribune
Washington, D. C.

# Democracy and the Poll Tax

FEB 22 1941

Senator Tom Connally from the poll tax state of Texas, where thousands of whites and Negroes are prevented from voting by the poll tax device, spoke before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday afternoon. He said unless we pass the "Lend Lease Bill" and Hitler is defeated, German bases to be established in South America, would hang like a "Damoclean Sword" over the heads of the people of the United States.

We are led to observe that politicians like Connally, Bilbo and others, together with their nefarious devices like the poll tax already and for some time have been hanging over our heads like a "Democlean Sword".

Chicago Bee
Chicago, Illinois

# Texas Primary Law

MAR 30 1941

SOME years ago the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision to the effect that the Democratic party was a private institution and the rule made by that party in Texas that barred Negroes from the primaries was not in contravention with the Constitution. The decision came subsequent to a case that had been adversely decided to the state of Texas involving the same set of facts except that the state legislature made the law barring Negroes from the Democratic primaries. In that case the United States Supreme Court told the state of Texas how to keep Negroes away from the primaries by delegating the Democratic party to do the unfinished task. It was so done.

In this month the United States district court for the Southern district of Texas had occasion to rule on the law applicable to the discrimination against Negroes in the Texas primary. The decision was favorable to the N. A. A. C. P. counsel that is handling this case. The case is headed for the United States Supreme court to decide the same issue that was decided adversely against Negroes.

With the new social-minded associate justices of the Supreme court the issues should again be decided by that court. It takes no stretch of the imagination to understand that the right to vote is closely correlated with the right to participate in the primaries. This is especially true in the southern states where the successful candidates in the Democratic primaries win the election. Therefore if a Negro can not participate in the primaries he is barred from the privilege of choosing the officials of the state.

MAR 30 1941

The Supreme court in the previous case took the position that as long as an individual or a private organization prevents a person from voting because he is colored that is none of the court's business insofar as the violation of the Constitution is concerned. The court, however, did not concern itself with the tie-up of the Democratic party with the functions of the state. It did not look through the thin screen of formality to view the real issue involved. It permitted the technicality to do that which the Constitution had barred states from doing.

The election machinery of the state of Texas, as in many other states, is an integral part of the primaries. All elections are preceded by primaries. Often the officials are the same in both. Their functions are similar. The primaries, for all intents and purposes, are part and parcel of the election machinery of the state of Texas.

# Poll Tax Time Again

DEC 31 1941

Houston Post

AT THE threshold of the last month for paying the poll tax, a reminder for this obligation of citizenship may be timely, lest the minor item of finance be lost in the shuffle of city, county and State levies, and the income taxes to come a little later.

There has been some talk of adjourning politics for the duration of the war, and this situation no doubt will help many public officials to reelection without serious opposition. At the same time, there are going to be some hot campaigns for local, State and congressional posts, and the citizen who neglects to qualify himself for participation in them simply will have stripped himself of the powers of citizenship, surrendered his sovereign privileges to those who have paid their poll taxes, to run the government as they choose.

DEC 31 1941

Far from relinquishing the reins of government without knowing who may pick them up, by failing to pay his poll tax, the patriotic citizen should want to maintain his grip upon them at this critical time, to the end that the best possible cooperation with the government's war program may be maintained in all State and local offices.

During the first World war the voters of Texas were called upon to ballot on some important special issues. Such issues may develop during the present war. At all events, every Texan by all means should pay his poll tax, and thus retain the function of democratic self-government, for which his country is now fighting.

DEC 31 1941

52e-1941

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# Sen. Sheppard Gets Told Off By a Farmer

MAR 1 3 1941

## Share-Croppers

San Antonio, Tex.

Workers Correspondence Dept.:

You all will remember me—the old sharecropper who got kicked off his place in the Panhandle because the landlord didn't like his ideas. I keep on thinking about this lend - lease bill and what a Texas senator, Morris Sheppard, did to put it over on us. I don't reckon that Morris ever had to shoulder a gun in his life since he's been in Congress living at public expense most of his life. Me and my neighbors can't get WPA jobs at $40 a month although we've all got kids whining for biscuits at home. Morris and the rest of the Southerners in Congress wrung the neck of WPA just like my wife would ring a chicken's neck, and they're sure howling for guns and blood.

MAR 1 3 1941

Morris is the chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs even if he never had to fight cooties in France like my brother's boy did. Morris thinks nothing of having a few million workingmen killed; that's no crime in his eyes. But you all will remember that he sponsored the prohibition amendment and would have had thrown on the chain gang anybody caught taking a drink.

Well, the prohibition amendment was finally repealed. And if us Texas folks ever get rid of the poll tax so we can vote, we're sure going to repeal Morris Sheppard.

All of us have been fooled up in Morris all these years hearing the big talk that he's made about what he's done up in Washington.

Morris was just a plain East Texas Congressman when we put him in the Senate to succeed Joe Bailey who had got tangled up with the oil companies. Morris had told us that he would see that the oil men behaved themselves and that the common people in Texas would get a square deal.

Well, you can see how he's kept his promises. Today, the Wall Street companies own Texas and most all of East Texas. They have cheated thousands of East Texas farmers, particularly colored ones, out of their oil rights. Thousands of acres without oils have been grabbed up by lumber companies who claimed that the farmers had defective titles even if their folks had homesteaded the land while Texas was still a part of Mexico.

MAR 1 3 1941

Morris has never had a word to say about all this hi-jacking of good, common folks who never had an education and never learned how to protect themselves. He's let the oil companies grab a big part of Texas. Now he wants to give them a big army so they can grab a big part of Mexico

Some of the boys in the labor unions are talking about a Farmer-Labor Party for Texas. Their talk might interest Morris since he comes up for reelection next year.

Amsterdam News
New York, N. Y.

# Texas White Primary Case Scheduled To Be Heard April 14th

APR 1 2 1941

HOUSTON, Texas.—Unless it is postponed at the last minute, the hearing on the latest Texas primary case will be held her Monday, April 14, before Judge T. M. Kennerly ,in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas.

This is the case where Sidney Hasgett of this city is suing because he was denied registration to vote last July. The defendants are Election Judges Werner and Blackburn of the 19th precinct.

It is expected that the case will be tried on its merits, the first time this has ever happened in a white primary case. All other cases have been dismissed or decided on pleadings alone. When the present case came up on March 5, Judge Kennerly denied the defendants. motion to strike and dismiss. The court ruled: "the defendants' motion to dismiss brings forward questions of law which should be decided upon the evidence, not on the pleadings.

APR 1 2 1941

W. D. Durham and Thurgood Marshall, NAACP attorneys, will appear for Hasgett. If there should be a setback in the lower court, it is planned to carry the action to the U.S. supreme court.

TEXAS

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# White Primary System Before Supreme Court

APR 19 1941

## Court Asked If Matter Covered By Constitution

APR 19 1941

WASHINGTON, D. C. — The white primary system of the South, which effectively disfranchises colored citizens in the one-party states, was attacked by the federal government in a criminal case in the Supreme Court last week.

Herbert Wechsler, a special assistant to the Attorney General, posed the question whether the right of a qualified voter to vote in the Louisiana primary election and to have his vote counted as cast by the commissioners of election is not a right secured or protected by the Constitution of the United States.

APR 19 1941

**DETERMINES ELECTION**

**He argued that in Louisiana the Democratic primary is not only an integral part of the election process, but it is the determinative part.**

He pointed out that one of the major reasons for the development of the primary election was that in the South, where nomination by the dominant party meant election, it is obvious that the will of the electorate would not be expressed at all unless it was expressed at the primary.

**"Interference with the right to vote in the primary," he said, "deprives the voter of an opportunity to express a choice at the only stage in the process when the expression is of genuine significance."**

His contentions were denied by Warren O. Coleman, attorney for five New Orleans election commissioners charged with changing votes cast in a Democratic Congressional primary.

The indictment against the election commissioners was dismissed by the Easterin Louisiana Federal District Court on the ground that the Supreme Court had held that Congress had no authority to regulate primaries but only general elections.

**"If a State prefers to conduct Congressional elections in two steps rather than in one," Wechsler said, "the protection of the Constitution reaches to both. Where, as in Louisiana, the first step is not only important, but is actually decisive, the constitutional guarantee necessarily applies."**

APR 19 1941

The court took the case under advisement.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# Texas Primary Case Hearing on April 14

HOUSTON, Tex.—The hearing on the latest Texas white primary case will be held here Monday, April 14, before Judge T. M. Kennerly, in the United States district court for the southern district of Texas.

APR 12 1941

This is a case where Sidney Hasgett of this city is suing because he was denied registration to vote last July. It is expected that the case will be tried on its merits. W. D. Durham and Thurgood Marshall, NAACP attorneys, will appear for Hasgett.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Contend State Primary Is "Closed" Body

NOV 4 1941

## Case Has Been In Court Since Last January

FORT WORTH, Tex.— (SNS) — An early decision can be expected in the Texas "white primary" case for which brief will be filed in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, November 13, the NAACP announced this week. If a favorable decision is reached it will wipe out one big obstacle in the way of full franchisement for Negro Americans, the NAACP declared.

The case has been in court since last January when Sidney Hasgett of Houston, a qualified voter, filed a complaint on charges that he was denied the right to vote in the primary election of Democratic party August 15, 1940. Hasgett is suing for $5,000 damages and a judgment declaring that he had the right to vote. Defendants are election judges Warner and Blackburn of the 19th precinct.

NOV 4 1941

The case was first heard in April before the U. S. District Court, Southern District of Texas, when both parties agreed that the election judges did deny Hasgett the privilege of voting because of his color. No decision was reached at this time, but Judge T. M. Kennerly asked for the briefs and transcripts of the testimony to study before making a decision.

The new action is an appeal based on the decision which was returned against Hasgett.

Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the NAACP, and W. J. Durham of Sherman, Texas, are attorneys for Hasgett. They state that tne question involved is whether or no. the Democratic primary in Texas is "state action" within the meaning of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Since the Democratic party is in control in the state, victory of a candidate in its primary is tantamount to election.

The defendants maintain that the primary is a private or "closed" institution and not a state action.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

# Texas 'White Primary' Case Goes to Trial Monday, April 14, at Houston

APR 11 1941

HOUSTON.—Unless it is postponed at the last minute, the hearing on the latest Texas white primary case will be held here Monday, April 14, before Judge T. M. Kennerly, in the United States district court for the southern district of Texas.

This is a case where Sidney Hasgett of this city is suing because he was denied registration to vote last July. The defendants are Election Judges Werner and Blackburn of the 19th precinct.

It it expected that the case will be tried on its merits. This is the first time this has happened in a white primary case. All other cases have been dismissed or decided on pleadings alone. When the present case came up March 5, Judge Kennerly denied the defendants' motion to strike and dismiss. The court ruled: "the defendant's motion to dismiss brings forward questions of law which should be decided upon the evidence, not on the pleadings."

APR 11 1941

W. D. Durham and Thurgood Marshall, N.A.A.C.P. attorneys, will appear for Hasgett. If there should be a setback in the lower court, it is planned to carry the action to the U. S. supereme court.

New York Age
New York, N. Y.

# Texas White Primary Under Fire As Suit Opens In U. S. District Court In Houston

APR 26 1941

HOUSTON, Texas—After having been postponed from April 14, the Texas white primary case, Hasgett vs. Werner and Blackburn, opened here Friday morning, April 18. Judge T. M. Kennerly of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas is hearing the case.

Proceedings began last January when Sidney Hasgett a qualified voter, filed a complaint on charges that he was denied the right to vote in the Democratic primary August 15, 1940, after he had appeared at the polls with his poll tax receipt. Denial was based on the fact that he is a Negro.

Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People who with W J. Durham of Sherman, Texas is acting for Hasgett, issued the following statement:

APR 26 1941

"The question involved is whether or not the Democratic primary in Texas is 'state action' within the meaning of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. We maintain that the right to vote includes three distinct steps: (1) qualifying to vote, (2) selection of candidates, and (3) the actual election. The supreme court has held that Negroes cannot be prevented from taking part in steps one and three. We maintain that the selection of candidates by a primary election pursuant to state statutes is just as much part of the election machinery of the state as the actual election.

APR 26 1941

'We will also show that Negroes in Houston formerly voted in primary elections prior to 1923 when they were barred by statute".

The defendants will maintain that the primary is a private institution and is not a "state action."

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# White Primary Decision Is Expected Soon

APR 29 1941

HOUSTON, Tex.—(S N S)—Expecting that Federal Judge T. M. Kennerly of the U. S. District court, southern district of Texas, will very soon render a decision in the Texas white primary suit, Hasgett vs. Werner and Blackburn, both plaintif and defendant have indicated their intention to appeal, should the decision go against one or the other.

It was agreed at the hearing April 18 that the two election officials did deny Hasgett the privilege of voting in the Democratic primaries July and August, 1940, solely because of race or color. After the hearing the judge asked for briefs, exhibits and the transcripts of the testimony to study before handing down decision.

APR 29 1941

Hasgett is suing for $5000 damages and a judgment declaring that he had the right to vote. He is being represented by Thurgood Marshall of New York, special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, W. J. Durham, of Sherman, Texas, and H. S. Davis, Jr., of this city.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Was Denied Vote Right, Man Claims

## NAACP Lawyers Take Lead In Important Fight

APR 22 1941

HOUSTON, Texas—(SNS)—After having been postponed from April 14, the Texas white primary case, Hasgett vs. Werner and Blackburn, opened here Friday morning, April 18. Judge T. M. Kennerly of the United States district court for the southern district of Texas is hearing the case.

Proceedings began last January when Sidney Hasgett, a qualified voter filed a complaint on charges that he was denied the right to vote in the Democratic primary August 15, 1940, after he had appeared at the polls with his poll tax receipt. Denial was based on the fact that he is a Negro.

Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who with W. J. Durham of Sherman, Texas, is acting for Hagsett, issued the following statement:

APR 22 1941

"The question involved is whether or not the Democratic primary in Texas is 'state action within the meaning of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. We maintain that the right to vote includes three distinct steps: (1) qualifying to vote, (2) selection of candidates, and (3) the actual election. The supreme court has held that Negroes cannot be prevented from taking part in steps one and three. We maintain that the selection of candidates by a primary election pursuant to state statutes is just as much a part of the election machinery of the state as the actual election.

"We will show at the hearing that the primary elections are made and held pursuant to statutes which are followed. That the Democratic nominees Texas is a loose-jointed organization with no set rules or regulations except the statutes which they follow.

"We will also show that since 1859 all Democratic nominees have been elected in Texas with two exceptions. We will show further that the primaries use the county clerk and other state officers in these primary elections and follow the state machinery.

APR 22 1941

"We will also show that Negroes in Houston formerly voted in primary elections prior to 19923 when they were barred by statute."

The defendants will maintain that the primary is a private institution and is not a "state action."

Texas

Negro Labor News
Houston, Texas

## POLL TAX FAVORED

JAN 11 1941

Despite the fact that recent years have seen numerous attempts on the part of organizations throughout the State of Texas to abolish the now existing poll tax qualification for voters, according to Joe Belden's Texas Surveys of Public Opinion over 59 percent of the people of the state are opposed to abolishing the poll tax.

Following is a general report of the survey as released Saturday, January 4, 1940 issue of The Texas Digest:

"Joe Belden's Texas Surveys of Public Opinion reports that 59 percent of the people of the state are opposed to abolishing the poll tax qualification for voting. This circumstance should provide food for thought to the Texas Presidential electors of the recent election. It will be recalled that these electors adopted a resolution proposing abolition of he electoral college and the substitution of elecion of the president by direct popular votes. They proposed, in effect that Texas shall swap its 23 electoral votes for whatever popular vote it can manage to poll in presidential elections.

"Less than half of all citizens of Texas over twenty-one years old ever pay their poll taxes, and consequently much less than half such citizens ever vote in any eection. It is a popular idea that more of them would vote of the poll tax qualification were removed, but the results of this survey would indicate that there is little chance of this being done in the near future.

"Nevertheless, the Texas Presidential electors have appointed a committee to memorialize Congress in favor of abolishing the elcetoral college. If this change were to be made, the influence of Texas in Presidential elections would be more than cut in half, unless some way could be found to more than double the popular vote in Texas. And the people do not favor abolishing the poll tax."

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla

# Ask $5,000 For Vote Ban In Texas; New Suit Against Primary Starts In Houston

### NAACP Member Files Suit After He Is Refused Ballot In Run-off Primary

JAN 25 1941

### May Be Tried In Federal Court

HOUSTON.—(ANP)—Sidney Hasgett, member of the official family of the NAACP and an official of the Hodcarriers union of Houston, filed suit Tuesday asking for $5,000 damage against Theodore Warner and John H. Blackburn, election judges who refused him a ballot to vote in the Democratic run-off primary on August 24.

The suit was filed in the federal district court in the section presided over by Judge James V. Allred. Atty. W. J. Durham, resident counsel, associated with Atty. Thurgood Marshall of the national office of the NAACP, was representing Mr. Hasgett. They were accompanied to the courthouse by the Rev. A. A. Lucas, president of both the Houston and the state branch of the NAACP, Atty. H. S. Davis and Carter Wesley, publisher of the Informer.

**Action Sounds In Damage**

The action relies upon the federal laws which prohibit the deprivation of the citizens' rights to vote. The petition alleges facts showing that the primary election is an essential part of the act of electing officials in the state of Texas. The gist of the contention is that whereas the primary was once conceived as a sort of preliminary action before the final period came for voting in the general election, it is now an essential step to the selection of the officials. Thus, since the primary is an essential part of the act of casting a vote for the determination of officials, the plaintiff contends that he cannot be properly deprived of the right to participate in the Democratic primary.

The plaintiff also shows that the primary laws apply to the selection of president, Senator, representative and other state officials. Then, the plaintiff goes on to point out that the primary laws apply to parties that cast 100,000 votes or more in a previous election. Following that up, the petition shows that the Democratic party is the only party that has consistently cast 100,000 votes in elections and is therefore the only party the primary law governs. Then the petition shows that the Democratic primary has determined the officials of Texas in all but perhaps two elections during the last 40 years.

Counsel for the plaintiff had in mind the fact that the supreme court of the United States had practically adopted the decision of Chief Justice Cureton of the Texas Supreme Court, holding that the Democratic party was a separate and private party with the right to decide who could take part in it. In the present suit, foundation is laid in the pleading to prove that the Democratic primary, as operated in Texas, is nothing more nor less than a scheme to bar Negroes from having an effective voice in political affairs of the state.

Proper predicate is laid to put in evidence the history of the operation of the Democratic primary to show the continuing scheme to bar Negroes. It is in this connection that the case is distinguished from the previous cases that have been taken up from Texas. Heretofore, the cases have been content to set out the legal complaint of the disfranchisement and have not gone to the trouble of gathering the evidence and making the allegations to show the intent and purpose to bar Negroes through the primary.

Although the decision of the supreme court of the United States in the case of Grovey vs. Townsend was a set-back to Negroes in Texas, since that decision the Supreme court has struck down the last vestiges of the grandfather clause in Oklahoma in the case of Lane vs. Wilson. The line of reasoning in that case gives added hope to Negroes that when the full outline of the practice of the primary is put before the supreme court, they will strike it down.

The suit was delayed because the lawyers in Texas, as well as those in New York and Washington, had to reconcile their various theories about the case. But the foundation is considered broader and more certain because all of them took part in preparing this case.

Globe and
Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

# THE NAACP MAKES ANOTHER FUTILE EFFORT IN TEXAS TO CHANGE THE IMPOSSIBLE

JAN 31 1941 JAN 31 1941

The National Association for The Advancement of Colored People, is a meritorious organization, and in its many years of effort to better the conditions of the race; its officers being human, the Association has rendered the race yeoman service; and to the contrary, it has made some blunders that nullified much of the good it had done; and to this end a large majority of the people, the Association assays to speak for, do not believe in the sincerity of the leadership of the organization. And regard the movement as an effort to help the few at the top, who do not need help, at the expense of the many at the bottom, who are much in need of assistance.

The common Negro has lost faith in the effort of the officers of the Association, to put through Congress an anti-lynch bill. In fact, many of the people believe the effort is only used as a slogan by the officers, to keep themselves politically before the public, for personal gain. If the effort means anything more than that, why do the officers of the Association always support the democratic party, which stands out boldly against the anti-lynch bill, in preference to the republican party, that stands out boldly for the passage of an anti-lynch law?

The democrats refused to pass legislation against mob law, and defeat every effort of the republican party, to pass an anti-lynch law. The Association has spent thousands of dollars of the common Negro's money in an effort to enact anti-mob legislation, and have not gotten anywhere as yet. Why, because the leaders of the Association have double-crossed themselves and the rank and file of the membership of the organization, by preaching anti-lynch legislation, until the campaign opens; and then work and vote for the political party that flatly refuses to put a plank in its platform, against the political party that openly puts a plank in its platform in favor of passing legislation against mob law? A plain case of double crossing self.

JAN 31 1941 JAN 31 1941

## THE TEXAS FIASCO

The recent reported effort of the NAACP, in Texas to break into the white democratic primary, is the repeated effort of a few Negro leaders, to do the impossible thing. The Negroes in America can hardly do the things that are legally possible; and if they cannot do things that are legally possible, how are they going to do things that are legally impossible? No honest well informed lawyer will so advise his clients. There is no sane reason why the Negro, who is ninety per cent republican, should want to vote in a white democratic primary, when the democrats stand diametrically opposed to everything the Negro wants and believes in. If the Negro is trying to break into the white democratic primary, or vote for patriotic reasons, the white man's primary is no bar to his objective. He can exercise his objective by organizing a black republican primary, or a primary of any other name he may choose, and disbar the white man from voting in it, just as the white man bars the Negro today, and the white man will not find anything in the Constitution that will enable him to break into the black man's primary.

The 14th Amendment to the Federal Constitution, made the Negro a citizen of the United States and of the state wherein he resides. This Amendment provides, that "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The 15th Amendment to the Constitution further provides: "The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, solor or previous condition of servitude."

But neither the 14th or 15th Amendments to the Constitution, did not prohibit private citizens, from peaceably assembling, and organizing themselves, into religious, fraternal, political or any other kind of organization that they may think will best protect their general welfare. The prohibition set out in these Amendments operate against the state, and not against the right of citizens acting personally. The white primary in Texas is patterned after the white primary in Georgia, where the white citizens come together and provide rules and regulations by which they will select their candidates in the state election later. These primaries are held at the cost of the persons who aspire to be candidates in the election. They are not supervised by the state neither does the state meet their cost. When the white people or any other people, who act, are purely in their rights, and any group of citizens who may desire to form a political party, has the right to do so. There is nothing in the Constitution to prohibit any assembly of people for the purpose of organizing a primary, church, or lodge, and fixing the qualifications of those who make applications to become members or a part of the organization. Texas once had a primary controlled and paid for by the State. The Colored people took this primary law to the Supreme Court of the United States, which declared it un-Constitutional. Then the white people in Texas adopted the Georgia idea of a primary; it too was taken to the Federal Court by Negroes in Texas and the Federal District Court decided that it had no jurisdiction in the matter, for the reason that the state was not involved, and the primary was a voluntary action of private citizens at their own expense without supervision of any constituted authority. Hence, the new effort will fail as the last effort did in the District Court.

52e-1941

TEXAS

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Renew Fight To Break Texas White Primary

HOUSTON, Texas — (SNS) — The Texas state conference of NAACP branches in cooperation with the association's national office has renewed its fight to break the "White Primary" of this state.

A complaint was filed here, Tuesday, January 15, in the United State District Court by Sidney Hasgett, a qualified Negro who was denied the right to vote in the Democratic primary last year. The action was brought against Theodore Wer ner and John H. Blackburn, Judges of the Primary elections, and seeks $5,000 actual damages and $5,000 punitive damages for violation of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution and federal laws passed pursuant to the amendment.

Hasgett, a qualified voter of the 19th precinct in Houston, presented himself at the polls on August 24, 1940 with his poll tax receipt, and requested the right to vote in the Democratic primary. This was denied him on the grounds that he was a Negro. Hasgett sought the assistance of the NAACP.

The Texas state conference of the NAACP branches, with the cooperation of the association's national office, began on the case. W. J. Durham of Sherman, Texas, has been retained as local counsel. Mr. Durham requested the cooperation of Thurgood Marshall, special counsel; Wm. H. Hastie, L. A. Ransom, J. N. Nabrit and W. Robert Ming, Jr., members of the NAACP national legal committee. The Texas State Conference of the NAACP branches is raising a defense fund of $8,000 for the case.

New York Age
New York, N. Y.

# First Tilt In Texas Primary Case Won By N.A.A.C.P. In Legal Skirmish

DALLAS, Tex.—The first skirmish in the legal battle against the Democratic white Primary in Texas was won here March 5 when Judge Thomas M. Kennerly of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas set April 14 for a hearing on the merits of the case of Hasgett v. Werner, et al.

This is the first time in the history of white primary cases where the court has ordered a hearing on the merits, which automatically permits the introduction of evidence. Attorneys for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, headed by Thurgood Marshall, special counse from the New York office, regard this as an important step in the long fight against disfranchisement.

Judge Kennerly denied the defendant's motion to strike certain portions of the complaint filed by Hasgett and his NAACP attorneys and also denied the motion to dismiss the complaint. The court ruled "defendant's motion to dismiss brings forward questions of law which should be decided on the evidence, not on the pleadings. ."

**Ban Called Unconstitutional**

In all previous white primary cases the lower courts have dismissed the cases on pleadings and no evidence could be put in. The NAACP expects on April 14 to put in evidence to support the claim that Negroes are barred unconstitutionally from participating in elections in Texas.

The fundamental theory upon which this attack is being made is that the primary is an integral part of the election machinery of the State that the law governing primary elections in Texas is in most respects identical with that governing general elections, and that these individual defendants were appointed pursuant to statutory authority with powers and duties and to perform practically identical functions to those prescribed by statute for officals in general elections.

The action was brought by Sidney Hasgett, a resident of Houston, Tex., who alleges in his complaint that he was denied the right to vote in the primary in July, 1940. The case is being carried forward by the Texas branches of the N. A. A. C. P. and by the national office in New York.

The entire South is watching the Texas case in the hope that it will decide the white primary throughout Dixie. If the case goes to the United States supreme court and is won, white primaries in the South will be wiped out and hundreds of thousands of Negroes will be able to vote in state and local elections.

The NAACP has carried up two previous cases on voting to the highest U. S. court and won both, one in 1927 and one in 1932. The third, which was not handled by the association, but by private Texas citizens, was lost.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

# First Tilt in Tex. Primary Case Won by NAACP

DALLAS, Tex.—The first skirmish in the legal battle against the Democratic white primary in Texas was won here March 5 when Judge Thomas M. Kennerly of the U.S. District Court for the Southern Texas District set April 14 for a hearing on the merits of the case of Sidney Hasgett.

This is the first time in the history of white primary cases that the court has ordered a hearing on the merits, which automatically permits the introduction of evidence.

Attorneys for the NAACP, headed by Thurgood Marshall, special counsel from the New York office, regard this as an important step in the long fight against disfranchisement.

**Dismissal Plea Denied**

Judge Kennerly denied the defendant's motion to strike certain portions of the complaint and also denied the motion to dismiss the complaint, ruling that: "defendant's motion to dismiss brings forward questions of law which should be decided on the evidence, not on the pleadings. . . ."

The NAACP expects on April 14 to prove that colored people are barred unconstitutionally from participating in elections in Texas, on the theory that the primary is an integral part of the election machinery of the State.

Mr. Hasgett, a resident of Houston, alleges that he was denied the right to vote in the primary in July, 1940. The case is being carried forward by the Texas branches and by the national office of the NAACP.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# First Tilt In Texas Voting Case Is Won

MAR 15 1941

## Hearing Ordered By Judge On Merits of Case

**DALLAS, Texas — The first skirmish in the legal battle against the Democratic white Primary in Texas was won here March 5 when Judge Thomas M. Kennerly of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas set April 14 for a hearing on the merits of the case of Hasgett v. Werner, et al.**

This is the first time in the history of white primary cases where the court has ordered a hearing on the merits, which automatically permits the introduction of evidence. Attorneys for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, headed by Thurgood Marshall, special counsel from the New York office, regard this as an important step in the long fight against disfranchisement.

MAR 15 1941

Judge Kennerly denied the defendant's motion to strike certain portions of the complaint filed by Hasgett and his NAACP attorneys and also denied the motion to dismiss the complaint. The court ruled, "defendant's motion to dismiss brings forward questions of law which should be decided on the evidence, not on the pleadings . . ."

**In all previous white primary cases the lower courts have dismissed the cases on pleadings and no evidence could be put in. The NAACP expects on April 14 to put in evidence to support the claim that Negroes are barred unconstitutionally from participating in elections in Texas.**

The fundamental theory upon which this attack is being made is that the primary is an integral part of the election machinery of the state, that the law governing primary elections in Texas is, in most respects, identical with that governing general elections, and that these individual defendants were appointed pursuant to statutory authority with powers and duties and to perform practically identical functions to those prescribed by statute for officials in general elections.

MAR 15 1941

**TWO PREVOUS CASES WON**

The action was brought by Sidney Hasgett, a resident of Houston, Texas, who alleges in his complaint that he was denied the right to vote in the primary in July, 1940. The case is being carried forward by the Texas branches of the NAACP and by the national office in New York.

**The NAACP has carried up two previous cases on voting to the highest U. S. court and won both, one in 1927 and one in 1932. The third, which was not handled by the association, but by private Texas citizens, was lost.**

Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn

# Lily-White Party In Texas Upheld By Federal Judge

MAY 10 1941

HOUSTON, May 14—(ANP)—Approval of the lily-white Democratic primary as now in use in Texas was given this week by Federal Judge T. M. Kennerly of the U. S. District Court. He decided in favor of the defendants in the case of Sidney Hasgett vs. election officials.

The case, which attracted wide attention in the South, was handled through the local branch of the N. A. A. C. P., with the assistance of Atty. Thurgood Marshall as associate legal advisor. It was heard on April 17 following many postponements. Judge Kennerly had the case under advisement for 16 days before giving his decision.

The plaintiff, Hasgett, sued election officials, contending he had been damaged to the extent of $5,000 when he was barred from voting in the Democratic primary.

Defense attorneys argued that Democratic party was a private organization and was entitled to exclude from membership any individual or groups it desired. Judge Kennerly upheld this contention.

Joining in the battle for the plaintiffs were Attys. H. S. Davis of Houston and W. J. Durham of Sherman, Texas.

An appeal to the circuit court in New Orleans is planned by the same attorneys, it was learned following the rendering of the adverse decision.

New York Age
New York, N. Y

# Texas White Primary Case To Be Carried To High U. S. Court

MAY 17 1941

**HOUSTON, Tex.—The court decided against Sidney M. Hasgett in his suit brought against election officials in Houston for $5000 damages and an order declaring that he had the right to vote in the state primary last year.**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People received notice Monday, May 5, that Judge T. M. Kennerly of the U. S. District Court, Southern District of Texas had filed his decision for the defendants.

Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the NAACP who is handling the case with W. J. Durham and Carter Wesley of Texas, announced that they will appeal the case on Hasgett's behalf.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

# *Tex. Primary Case Goes To Higher Court*

HOUSTON, Texas—The Texas court decided against Sidney M. Hasgett in his suit brought against election officials in Houston for $5000 damages and an order declaring that he had the right to vote in the state primary last year.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People received notice Monday, May 5, that Judge T. M. Kennerly of the U. S. District Court, Southern District of Texas had filed his decision for the defendants.

Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the N.A.A.C.P., who is handling the case with W. J. Durham and Carter Wesley of Texas, announced that they will appeal the case on Hasgett's behalf.

Washington Tribune
Washington. D. C.

# Judge Orders Hearing "On Merits" in Texas White Primary Case

MAR 15 1941

DALLAS, Texas. — The first skirmish in the legal battle against the Democratic White Primary in Texas was won here March 5 when Judge Thomas M. Kennerly of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas set April 14, for a hearing on the merits of the case of Hasgett V. Werner, et al.

This is the first time in the history of white primary cases where the court has ordered a hearing on the merits, which automatically permits the introduction of evidence. Attorneys for the NAACP headed by Thurgood Marshall, special counsel from the New York office, regard this as an important step in the long fight against disfranchisement.

Judge Kennerly denied the defendant's motion to strike certain portions of the complaint filed by Hasgett and his NAACP attorneys and also denied the motion to dismiss the complaint. The court ruled, "defendant's motion to dismiss brings forward questions of law which should be decided on the evidence, not on the pleadings . . .

MAR 15 1941

**To Admit Evidence**

In all previous white primary cases the lower cours have dismissed the cases on the pleadings and no evidence could be put in. The NAACP expects on April 14 to put in evidence to support the claim that Negroes are barred unconstitutionally from participating in elections in Texas.

MAR 15 1941

The fundamental theory upon which this attack is being made is that the primary is an integral part of the election machinery of the State, that the law governing primary elections in Texas is in most respects identified with that governing general elections, and that these individual defendants were appointed pursuant to statutory authority with powers and duties and to perform practically identical functions to those prescribed by statute for officials in general elections.

The action was brohght by Sidney Hasgett, a resident of Houston, Texas, who alleges in his complaint that he was denied the right to vote in the primary in July, 1940. The case is being carried forward by the Texas branches of the NAACP and by the national office in New York.

**South Eyes Outcome**

The entire South is watching the Texas case in the hope that it will decide the white primary throughout Dixie. If the case goes to the United States Supreme Court and is won, white primaries in the South will be wiped out and hundreds of thousands of Negroes will be able to vote in State and local elections.

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla

# Vote Fight Launched By Texas Negroes

**$8,000 TO BE RAISED FOR CAUSE**

MAR 15 1941

TYLER, Tex. — **Renewed efforts to secure the right for Negroes to participate in the primary elections in Texas is now in doing waged according to H. M. Morgan, president of Tyler Barber College.**

**$8,000 is the goal set in the drive to further democracy in Texas.**

MAR 15 1941

**Next to the problem of securing** the vote for Negroes is the effort now being made to secure equalization of salaries for Negro teachers.

Mme. E. Coleman, Lt. Bronze governor of the state several weeks ago sought the influence of President Morgan in this effort. In her letter Mme. Coleman asked that Morgan take over Tyler, Texas and the surrounding territory in a drive to raise $9,000.00. Five hundred dollars was quota set for the Tyler locality.

President Morgan's reply to the letter of Mme. Coleman is as foliows:

Feb. 25, 1941

Madam M. E. Coleman,
Bronze Lt. Governor of the
State of Texas,
c-o Coleman Beauty School
Dallas, Texas
Dear Madam:

Your letter of the 14th has been received and the contents therein carefully noted. It is a pleasure to know that one of your ability and influence is representing so worthy a cause. I am very sorry that I cannot accept the responsibility for raising $500 in this territory for your Teachers' Salary Equalization Fight, and decline ahe honor with apologies.

MAR 15 1941

I am very much interested in such a program, as well as any program, for the development of a fuller participation of the Texas Negro in the economical and political affairs of this great state. This, you well know, from my activities in Negro affairs of the state.

I cannot support your program, at this time, for two specific reasons. First, the Negro teachers, themselves, have very little interest in such a program. In analysing their obpectives for 1941, I find that salary equalization is not included in their agenda. I was at the last meeting of the Texas State Negro Teachers' Association in Marshall last November where the question of equalization of salaries for the teachers of Texas' public schools, was not allowed to arise. These teachers seemed to have been afraid that such a program might offend some white "educators" who might have something to do with the present status of the Texas Negro public school teacher. Secondlp, because the NAACP hasn't an equalizatiin of salaries fight on its program for Texas this year, and will not have until the teachers themselves show a more pointed interest in such a program. I say this authoritatively, having served, during the year 1940, as president of the Texas Conference of Branches of the NAACP; this year I am a member of the Executive Committee.

MAR 15 1941

We are now in the midst of a campaign to raise money for the Primary fight which, if won, will give the Texas Negro his political rights in all parties of the of the State. This suit has been filed in the Federal Court at Houston. Our ultimate goal, in this cause, is to raise eight thousand dollars ($8,000) and we have not reached the half-way mark as yet. Personally, I think that the Bronze Governor and his staff of officers should use every ounce of their executive energy given them by reason of their position, uniting with the NAACP set-up, and help to raise this sum of money to carry on this great fight. After a successful conclusion, we can all join hands with the endorsement of the teachers in promoting the program suggested by you.

MAR 15 1941

Please give this matter your unbiased attention and let me hear from you.

Very truly yours,
H. M. Morgan, President.

**TO BE SURE YOU DON'T GO WRONG VOTE AGAINST ALL OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN TUESDAY'S ELECTION.**

Negro Labor News
Houston, Texas

# GO TO THE POLLS

We urge the qualified colored citizens to exercise their privilege of voting in this special election for United States senator from Texas.

JUN 28 1941

All persons who hold a poll tax receipt or an exemption slip are eligible to vote. This is the first time in more than 35 years that Negroes have had the opportunity to cast an effective ballot for a United States senator.

By going to the polls in appreciative numbers, we will deny the charge that is often mae that Negroes are not interested in elections and would not vote when given an opportunity.

We are not attempting to tell you how to vote—but VOTE. It is your duty as a citizen to vote according to the dictates of your own conscience. Congressman Martin Dies, chairman of the committee investigating un-Ameircan Activities is OUR CHOICE.

JUN 28 1941

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

# U. S. DISTRICT JUDGE ORDERS HEARING APRIL 14 ON MERITS OF HASGETT VS. WERNER CASE

## For First Time in History, Evidence Will be Introduced Supporting Claim Negroes Unconstitutionally Barred from Polls

MAR 14 1941

DALLAS, Texas—The first skirmish in the legal battle against the Democratic white primary in Texas was won here March 5 when Judge Thomas M. Kennerly of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas set April 14 for a hearing on the merits of the case of Hasgett v. Werner, et al.

This is the first time in the history of white primary cases where the court has ordered a hearing on the merits, which automatically permits the introduction of evidence. Attorneys for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, headed by Thurgood Marshall, special counsel from the New York office, regard this as an important step in the long fight against disfranchisement.

Judge Kennerly denied the defendant's motion to strike certain portions of the complaint filed by Hasgett and his N.A.A.C.P. attorneys and also denied the motion to dismiss the complaint. The court ruled, "defendant's motion to dismiss brings forward questions of law which should be decided on the evidence, not on the pleadings .."

MAR 14 1941

**Previous Cases Dismissed**

In all previous white primary cases the lower courts have dismissed the cases on pleadings and no evidence could be put in. The N.A.A.C.P. expects on April 14 to put in evidence to support the claim that Negroes are barred unconstitutionally from participating in elections in Texas.

The fundamental theory upon which this attack is being made is that the primary is an integral part of the election machinery of the state, that the law governing primary elections in Texas is in most respects identical with that governing general elections, and that these individual defendants were appointed pursuant to statutory authority with powers and duties and to perform practically identical functions to those prescribed by statute for officials in general elections.

**Supported by N.A.A.C.P.**

The action was brought by Sidney Hasgett, a resident of Houston, Texas, who alleges in his complaint that he was denied the right to vote in the primary in July, 1940. The case is being carried forward by the Texas branches of the N.A.A.C.P. and by the national office in New York.

MAR 14 1941

The entire South is watching the Texas case in the hope that it will decide the white primary throughout Dixie. If the case goes to the United States supreme court and is won, white primaries in the South will be wiped out and hundreds of thousands of Negroes will be able to vote in state and local elections.

The N.A.A.C.P. has carried up two previous cases on voting to the highest U. S. court and won both, one in 1927 and one in 1932. The third, which was not handled by the association, but by private Texas citizens, was lost.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

# FIRST SKIRMISH IN FIGHT WON BY N. A. A. C. P.

MAR 22 1941

## Judge Kennerly Of United States District Court Sets Date, April 14

DALLAS, Texas—The first skirmish in the legal battle against the Democratic white primary in Texas was won here March 5 when Judge Thomas M. Kennerly of the United States district court for the Southern district of Texas set April 14 for a hearing on the merits of the case of Hasgett v. Werner, et al.

This is the first time in the history of white primary cases where the court has ordered a hearing on the merits, which automatically permits the introduction of evidence.

MAR 22 1941

Attorneys for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, headed by Thurgood Marshall, special counsel from the New York office, regard this as an important step in the long fight against disfranchisement.

Judge Kennerly denied the defendant's motion to strike certain portions of the complaint filed by Hasgett and his N.A.A.C.P. attorneys and also denied the motion to dismiss the complaint.

The court ruled, "defendant's motion to dismiss brings forward questions of law which should be decided on the evidence, not on the pleadings . . ."

In all previous white primary cases the lower courts have dismissed the cases on pleadings and no evidence could be put in. The N.A.A.C.P. expects on April 14 to put in evidence to support the claim that Negroes are barred unconstitutionally from participating in elections in Texas.

The fundamental theory upon which this attack is being made is that the primary is an integral part of the election machinery of the state, that the law governing primary elections in Texas is in most respects identical with that governing general elections, and that these individual defendants were appointed pursuant to statutory authority with powers and duties and to perform practically identical functions to those prescribed by statute for officials in general elections.

The action was brought by Sidney Hasgett, a resident of Houston, Texas, who alleges in his complaint that he was denied the right to vote in the primary in July 1940. The case is being carried forward by the Texas branches of the N.A.A.C.P. and by the national office in New York.

MAR 22 1941

The entire South is watching the Texas case in the hope that it will decide the white primary throughout Dixie. If the case goes to the United States Supreme Court and is won, white primaries in the South will be wiped out and hundreds of thousands of Negroes will be able to vote in state and local elections.

The N.A.A.C.P. has carried up two previous cases on voting to the highest U. S. court and won both, one in 1927 and one in 1932. The third, which was not handled by the association, but by private Texas citizens, was lost.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

# Refreshing News From Texas

• The defeat of Rep. Martin Dies in his home state Texas, where he was running for United States Senator, is of great and refreshing significance.

Although the overwhelming majority of the Negro and white masses in Texas are disfranchised by the poll tax and the "white primary," Dies had pretended that he was the "people's choice." Now it is clear that even in a poll tax state—in which Dies was elected to the House by 4 per cent of his constituency—the voters have repudiated him, and clipped his attempts to rise still higher on a program of reaction, red-baiting and persecution of labor. Dies' own neighbors have considerably deflated this fascist windbag, and have shown that he represents, not the people, but the sinister labor-hating interests of Wall Street and poll taxdom.

Surely the citizens of Texas know of Dies' infamous Committee, and the fact that Dies came out in the elections as a very lame tail-end out of four candidates shows what the people think of Dies and his Committee. This lesson should not be lost on the rest of the country in renewing its fight to scrap the Dies Committee.

Once the people of Texas and other poll tax states are armed with the ballot, they will be able to defeat Dies and all his kind; and send to Washington representatives who will advance the democratic interests of the Southern masses and thus enhance progress for the nation.

52e-1941

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# Addresses Vote Reform Organization

## Movement To Abolish Ban Set Up In Richmond

FEB 8 1941

**RICHMOND, Va. — Speaking at the organizational meeting of the newly formed Southern Electoral Reform League, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt lashed out last Saturday night against the poll tax voting ban in effect in nine of the Southern states and declared emphatically that "we cannot be a democracy and deny the vote to any individual."**

This declaration followed closely on the heels of the announcement of a proposed 15 point "program of progress for Virginia" by State Comptroller Leroy Hodges, which included, as point number two, "the abolition of the poll tax as a qualification for voting and reorganization of the suffrage registration system."

**FOR DEBATE**

Mr. Hodges, mentioned prominently as a possible candidate for the governorship in the next election, submitted his 15 point program for "public consideration and debate," he declared. Col. Hodges pointed out that is the number one obligation of citizenship in Virginia to think and to vote. However, he asserted that in this state three-fourths of the citizens are "hostilely indifferent to retaining their most valuable possession, the right of suffrage." Col. Hodges spoke on the same program with the first lady.

**Mrs. Roosevelt, in addressing the Electoral Reform League, declared: "We in this country are proving to the world a democracy really can function, but if we take the responsibility of proving that we live in a country having a democratic government, we must prove it is a fact for every individual."**

**DECISION FOR MAJORITY**

"It is perfectly natural that we should have differences of opinions but when we make a decision, it should be a decision of the majority of the people.

"The more the question is discussed the better it will be for all of us," she continued. "I hope reform will come not only in states having the poll tax but that all of us will become more conscious of the value of the vote.

**"I believe you keep neither rights nor privileges unless you assume the responsibilities that go with them. We should feel not only that the vote is valuable but that we owe it to the state and the nation to inform ourselves in order that we may know what we are voting about.**

FEB 8 1941

Mrs. Roosevelt was introduced by Governor James H. Price. She congratulated the league on organizing here Saturday at a meeting called to consider means o abolishing the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting.

**WANTS BACKER**

**David George of Riverdam, temporary chairman, declared this week that he was going to Washington in search of a patron for a bill to be introduced in the Senate as a companion bill to the Geyer House bill which would prohibit poll tax payments as a prerequisite to voting in elections for federal office.**

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

## *Poll-Tax Reform*

FEB 8 1941

The drive for repeal of the poll tax as prerequisite to voting has gained impressive momentum in Virginia. Prospects for this democratic reform are heightened by a vigorous newspaper campaign and the known sentiment of three out of the four candidates for the Governorship. State Senator Humsdon Cary and Ashton Dovell, former speaker of the House of Delegates, have included in their platforms a plank favoring retention of the poll tax merely to raise revenue for schools, without any tie to the ballot. State Senator Vivian Page has not stated his position on the issue in this campaign, but he sponsored a repeal bill three years ago. Moreover, State Controller LeRoy Hodges, who may become a fifth candidate with the prospect of strong support, has been an advocate of poll-tax repeal for years. But the joker may be in the hands of National Representative Colgate Darden, the candidate generally conceded to have the support of the Byrd organization. And Mr. Darden has not expressed himself on electoral problems.

FEB 8 1941

Virginians are in the van of a larger movement which took shape last week with the formation in Richmond of the Southern Electoral Reform League. This association, with membership from various parts of the South, may become of considerable consequence in the eight Southern States which still withhold the franchise from persons who have not paid —or had paid for them—the poll tax. Progressive Southerners realize that, apart from the rights and wrongs of the matter, sentiment in the Nation at large may force the issue. Two bills for poll-tax reform are in Congress, and a case which might set a legal precedent against operation of poll-tax laws is pending in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati. It would be to the credit of any State to democratize its voting requirements rather than to let reform be imposed from above.

VIRGINIA

Amsterdam News
New York, N. Y.

# GUEST EDITORIAL

JAN 4 1941

This guest editorial feature is open to all readers, regardless of station or training. The only requisites are clear, concise English and an important message of not more than 250 words.

This week's guest editorial is an appeal by several leading persons prominent in education and labor to abolish the poll tax and save the life of Odell Waller, whose plight is said to be "the most urgent of the pressing cases of victim of injustice."

**AN APPEAL AGAINST INJUSTICE**

Ten million American citizens, white and Negro, are prevented from voting and doing jury duty in eight southern states by state poll taxes. In Virginia, yearly poll tax is $1.50 and must be paid for three years back. This may not sound like much money, but to a 23-year-old Negro sharecropper, Odel Waller of Gretna, Virginia, the poll tax may mean the difference between life and death.

Sharecropper Waller is sentenced to die in a Richmond, Virginia electric chair for the self-defense shooting of his landlord, Oscar Davis. Ten of the all-white jury which convicted him were planters. Sharecroppers, who are the majority of county residents, were excluded because they were unable to pay the poll tax.

Under these circumstances a fair verdict was impossible. The shooting took place during a dispute when Davis was trying to cheat Waller out of his share of the entire season's crop. Waller brought along a gun when he came for his chare of the crop because, as he testified later, he knew that Davis had carried a weapon on previous occasions. Davis refused Waller's requests, and reached for his gun pocket. In panic Waller shot.

On the poll tax issue, and other issues, the Workers Defense League is appealing the case to the United States Supreme Court and has secured the excellent volunteer services of John F. Finerty, former attorney for Tom Mooney, as ssociate counsel.

Waller's plight is the most urgent of the pressing cases of victims of injustice being handled now by the Workers Defense League. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters are co-operating with us in his defense. We are called on frequently by the labor movement—to help as Hodcarriers local in Kentucky, Textile Workers in North Carolina and New Jersey, Teamsters in upstate New York, Shoeworkers in Maine, Taxi Drivers in Texas, Steelworkers in Ohio, Rubber Workers in Tennessee and New Jersey and by sharecroppers and migrant workers from New Jersey to California.

The League has succeeded in securing a stay of Waller's execution originally set for December 27. Several thousand dollars are urgently needed to carry the appeal of Waller's conviction to the United States Supreme Court. We beg you to make a generous contribution to reverse the conviction of sharecropper Waller, and to convict the poll tax in the highest court of the land.

Richmond, Va. News-Leader
February 24, 1941

**URGES NEGROES TO SEEK POLL TAX REFORM**

Editor, The News Leader:

Sir,—We stand for the abolition of the poll tax as a prerequisite to voting. We feel that citizenship should not be abridged by any process or subterfuge, and certainly there is no cause for any sort or semblance of subterfuge now. Poll taxes, we think, should be paid same as other tax assessments. But as it now is it works a hardship and in many instances the payment of this tax is made by others thus the voter is often handicapped and handled at will for private or personal ends rather than the consideration of the common good.

We also advocate free textbooks for free schools. Maryland has had this system for years—not only giving free textbooks, but free supplies as well. And it has been well stated by the Southern Planter that if a free school system is to be worthy of its name, it must provide free textbooks to equallze the opportunities of poor and rich alike. Many large families find the cost of textbooks a serious strain each fall. And the frequent change of textbooks works another hardship and expense. It appears in some cases that this is done to create business for book publishers. Twenty-eight States of the Union already furnish free textbooks for school children.

Our laws are made in our legislative body at Richmond by representatives chosen by the voters of the counties and cities over the State. And it is in this body they may be amended or changed. We feel that what is good for the masses of white citizens, all things considered, is equally good for all other citizens, regardless of creed or color. And I am wondering why it is that we are, as a rule, so slow to awake and arouse to the fact that in these changing times leaving things to chance and trusting to luck is a mighty poor policy.

There are three districts in Cumberland County. In the upper district the names of only two colored men were posted on the eligible voting list for the last election and I think three men in the lower district, while in Madison or middle district where a little civic league had been organized there were some 10 or more posted. Oh, the pity of it. This looks like we should take some steps to wake ourselves up.

Will the Negroes of Cumberland wake up—rouse from this state of indifference and lethargy and set about in a practical way to play their part as citizens by registering and doing whatever is necessary under the law to become recognized voters. We should be able to help elect broad-minded, liberal and right-thinking men to the positions of trust and honor from the governorship on down the line. Let us get in position to help our best white fellow citizens in this respect and line up with that party whose platform appears to have the broadest and most favorable planks looking to the best interest of all—using judgment and good common sense ever keeping in mind that all white folks are not evil-minded or antagonistic.

Let us recognize friendship, co-operate and accept all good favors from our white friends and leaders who are coming more and more to see some real good in Negro citizens whose environment has been good and whose training and education has been systematic rather than merely superficial—based on piety, common sense and religion.

GRANT DUNGEE.

Cumberland, Va.

New York Times
New York, N. Y.

**Three Democratic Candidates for Governor in Favor of Changing Law**

FEB 2 1941

By VIRGINIUS DABNEY

RICHMOND, Va., Feb. 1—There is an unprecedented trend toward poll-tax reform in Virginia, as evidenced by the fact that all three Democratic candidates for Governor, who have stated their positions on the issue are in favor of liberalization. Two are unequivocally for divorcing the tax from the franchise, with the substitution of a literacy test.

Former Speaker Ashton Dovell of Williamsburg, long regarded as a member of the party wing which owes allegiance to Senator Harry F. Byrd, surprised nearly everybody by announcing himself for repeal of the poll tax as a prerequisite to voting. He favors retention and enforcement of the levy as a means of raising school funds, and his position here is virtually identical with that of State Senator Hunsdon Cary of Henrico County. Neither Speaker Dovell nor Senator Cary ever favored poll-tax repeal, or modification, before. The third Gubernatorial candidate who takes a similar position is State Senator Vivian Page of Norfolk, who sponsored a repeal bill in the Legislature three years ago, but has not stated his exact position on the issue for the current campaign.

**Prospects for Reform**

Representative Colgate W. Darden of Norfolk, the fourth aspirant for the Governorship, who is almost universally assumed to have the backing of Senator Byrd, has not stated his position on the franchise or on the other major issues of the campaign. The prevailing assumption is that he will oppose liberalization of the voting requirements.

The only other possible entry into the race seems to be State Controller Leroy Hodges, who has been an advocate of poll-tax repeal for years, and who will certainly urge it if he gets into the contest.

He is being urged by independents and New Dealers to make the race on a "liberal" platform, but it is doubtful if he will do so, unless some of the other aspirants drop out.

Washington Tribune
Washington, D. C.

# Poll Tax Foes To Meet Here, Elect Heads

MAR 2 1 1941

**Board to Convene Saturday in D. C.; Mass Meeting Set In Alexandria**

Va

MAR 2 1 1941

By the Associated Press

Richmond, Va., March 20.—David G. George, of Hanover County, acting chairman of the newly formed Southern Electoral Reform League, said the league board would elect permanent officers at a meeting in Washington Saturday.

The league is devoted to a fight against poll taxes as a condition of voting in the eight Southern States still retaining the tax.

The board, which was elected at a Richmond conference February 1, addressed by Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt, will meet at the Woman's National Democratic Club in Washington on Saturday, George said. There will be a preliminary morning session, a luncheon with the main session being in the afternoon.

George said various board members and several prominent Virginians would address a mass meeting at the George Washington High School auditorium in Alexandria at 8 p. m. Saturday. He listed the speakers as State Senator Hunsdon Cary, of Henrico, candidate for Governor subject to the Democratic primary; State Comptroller Leroy Hodges, United States Senator Claude Pepper, of Florida, and Jennings Perry, editor of the Nashville Tennesseean.

MAR 2 1 1941

The league's board now includes Col. Hodges and George, for Virginia; Dr. Frank P. Graham, president of the University of North Carolina; Mrs. May Thompson Evans, former assistant director of the women's division of the Democratic National Committee; Mrs Julia Peterkin, of South Carolina; Dr. Arthur L. Raper, of Georgia; Senator Pepper and Frank McCallister, of Florida; Mrs. Virginia Durr and William Mitch, of Alabama; Perry and Carl V. Stafford, of Tennessee; Barry Bingham, of the Louisville Courier-Journal and Times; William F. Hutchens, of Arkansas; James J. Morrison, of Louisiana; United States Senator Josh Lee, of Oklahoma, and William F. Cochran, of Maryland.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

# *Va. Governor Takes 'Swing' At Poll Tax*

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(ANP)—From the state of Virginia Gov. James H. Price says "It would be well to investigate the small vote," resulting in the democratic primary in which only 1-20th of the population of the state voted.

The governor, who is already on record as favoring a reduction of the poll tax from $1.50 to $1, declared that "if we are not going to liberalize the poll tax, let's abolish it altogether."

AUG 6 1941

Known throughout the state as a progressive governor, Price's term ends this year and his successor, who is usually elected following the democratic nomination will have this precednt to follow in the fight against the pernicious poll tax.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

# Virginia Governor Wants Lower Or No Poll Tax

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(ANP)—From the state of Virginia, Gov James H. Price says "it would be well to investigate the small vote" resulting in the democratic primary in which only1-20th of the population of the state voted.

The governor, who is already on record as favoring a reduction of the poll tax from $1.50 to $1, declared that "if we are not going to liberalize the poll tax, let's abolish it altogether."

AUG 7 1941

Known throughout the state as a progressive governor, Price's term ends this year and his successor, who is usually elected following the democratic nomination will have this precedent to follow in the fight against the pernicious poll tax.

Richmond, Va., Times-Dispatch
October 31, 1941

## Poll Taxes and Waller—III

NEW light on the ODELL WALLER case is shed by JOHN F. FINERTY of Washington, one of the attorneys defending the Negro sharecropper recently convicted of murdering OSCAR DAVIS, the white tenant whose land he worked in Pittsylvania County. MR. FINERTY contributes a letter to the Voice of the People today, which indicates that the poll-tax issue in the case is very much alive, and that counsel for WALLER plan to ask the Virginia courts for a writ of habeas corpus to determine whether WALLER has been denied his constitutional right of equal protection of the law, under the State and Federal Constitutions.

MR. FINERTY also makes plain the reason why "no evidence had been offered in the trial court to support the assertion that nonpayers of poll taxes were in fact barred from the grand and petit juries" in the WALLER case. This, he says, "was due to a misunderstanding by trial counsel as to the necessity for such proof."

He states that the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals "has denied that nonpayers of poll taxes are, by law, barred from grand and petit juries," but has "not decided whether, without authority in law, they are in fact so barred." This indicates that more will be heard concerning the poll-tax-and-jury issue in the Old Dominion.

It seems to us manifestly improper and illegal that the poll tax should be made prerequisite to jury service in Virginia, and if it is being made such a prerequisite in this State, the practice cannot be defended. Whether counsel for WALLER can establish beyond all peradventure that the practice prevails in Pittsylvania, where WALLER was tried, or in many other Virginia counties or cities, remains to be seen. MR. FINERTY admits that more than 20 persons on the Pittsylvania petit jury list of over 300 names, had not paid their poll taxes for 1940, although they had paid them at one time or another in the past. At all events, it is desirable to have this important matter finally decided by the courts, and the outcome will be awaited with widespread interest.

52e-1941

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

# Poll Tax Foes To Hear Address By Mrs. Roosevelt

JAN 28 1941

Richmond, Va., Jan. 27 (AP).—The Southern Electoral Reform League will hear an address here February 1 by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt at a meeting called to consider means of abolishing the poll tax as a prerequisite to voting, David G. George, of Beaverdam, secretary of the league's provisional committee, has announced.

At the meeting, George said, there will be established "a permanent Virginia State organization, to lay the foundations for a South-wide movement and to plan its expansion into the seven other poll-taxed States." These are South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# The Drift Of The Current

By J. THOMAS NEWSOME

APR 5 - 1941

EVERYBODY HAS heard something about the Reconstruction Period in the South when inefficiency and corruption were said to be rampant. Because the Negro had been recently enfranchised, all of the venality and corruption were charged up to him. Even now, whenever justice is demanded for the Negro as a citizen and his full right to the ballot stressed as a constitutional guarantee, some man rises in his place and waves the bloody shirt of the past and brings out the bugaboo called Negro domination and tells what the South went through under the so-called Negro rule.

MR. NEWSOME

**It is true that this sort of political demagoguery is losing some of its force with the thinking citizenry, white and black, throughout the entire country, yet it is very much alive and sometimes succeeds in landing incompetents and marplots in office.**

**WANT POLL TAX ABOLISHED**

All of the candidates now seeking the office of Governor of Virginia have made it plain that their appeal to the electorate will not be based upon the threadbare issue once relied upon in the South by those seeking high office. To the surprise of this column, two of the aspirants for gubernatorial honors have come out boldly for the abolition of the poll tax as a prerequisite to voting. In other words, their position is that the poll tax, the prime purpose of which was to preclude Negroes from voting, has gone far beyond the mark and virtually disfranchised white men as well.

APR 5 - 1941

While not expressed in any of the candidates' announcements and declarations of principles, it is an admission that the poll tax requirement is undemocratic and highly subversive of the best interests of the Commonwealth. This is a long stride in the right direction, and if translated into actuality, will place the Old Dominion with those states which have long ago recognized the dangerous tendency of this political subterfuge and trickery.

**WHOLE-HEARTED POLICY**

**If the present crisis facing this country has done no other good, it has brought it face to face with the stubborn fact that if democracy is to perpetuate itself as a way of life, it must live up to its Constitution with all of its amendments which guarantees equality of all men before the law.**

And this must not be an "equality" restricted by prejudices and technicalities, but a wholehearted policy affording to all citizens equal opportunity and immunities so that each individual will feel secure and free from discrimination and proscription because of race, creed, color or condition.

In fine, we must have either a democracy in which the people rule or a totalitarian state, under rulers whose word is law without regard to the wishes of the people.

VIRGINIA

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

## Ballots Balance Power

THE Virginia Voters League, with headquarters at Petersburg, is in the final weeks of a systematic compaign to organize and register 5,000 poll tax payers in 80 counties in the state, prior to the August primaries and the state elections in November.

An admirable aspect of the effort is that the League is confining the campaign to the rural districts, where resistance to the exercise of suffrage is most adamant and participation most difficult.

The organization has chosen 80 county chairmen to direct a breakdown plan which is producing "encouraging success." The techniques used and the ultimate results will have a significant effect upon Negro suffrage throughout the "solid South."

JUL 19 1941

The League's object is not to develop party alignment. League officials state they are "not interested in who they vote for, we are only concerned that they vote."

The findings of this body will also serve to further illuminate the evils of the poll tax system, which have been brought to national attention by the fight to pass the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill. With this system, eight southern states virtually disfranchise ten million colored and white citizens. These states are: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia—the "black empire" of the nation. They send 16 senators and 78 representatives to Congress. But they are neither put into office, nor can be voted out of office by the majority at home.

How the system is a travesty on democracy is shown in the 1940 general elections when Texas led this group with a 28.7 percent of her eligible voters and South Carolina was at the bottom with 8.8 percent.

JUL 19 1941

If other states will follow the intelligent campaign now underway in Virginia, to get those persons who have paid poll taxes, to register and therefore qualify to vote some significant progress can be made. The poll tax is a retardation, of course, to both colored and white potential voters, but once having been paid there is every reason why those therefore eligible should qualify to vote at once.

In a democracy, the ballot is the individual's only guarantee of his life, his liberty and his natural pursuit of happiness. The disfranchised southern white is beginning to experience the unending sufferings long felt by the southern Negro.

The nation as a whole has felt the sting through obstruction of progressive legislation by these poll tax autocrats who represent only 17 percent of the states and yet hold chairmanships of 50 percent of important committees in both Houses of Congress.

Danville, Va., Register
July 17, 1941

## WIND BLASTING FROM RALEIGH

For a wind blaster who professes 'little inclination" for his task, Jonathan Daniels, editor of the Raleigh News and Observer, manages to stir up quite a gusty attack on Virginia history and Virginia democracy as the contribution of his great journal to the current controversy between tourist promotion agents in the neighboring states. His piece is reprinted in the adjoining column.

As the Raleigh editor warms up to his job of justifying use by North Carolina of the advertising phrase: "Birthplace of the Nation," the social reformer takes over and the historian is booted out of the editorial office. It is apparent the Southerner who saw New England is more concerned over the continued use of the poll tax in Virginia than with the rumpus over history. Begrudgingly, perhaps, he may be persuaded a case can be made out for the justice of Jamestown's fame, although, for the moment, he casts reflections upon that first city of colonists. The poll tax is quite another thing. Mr. Daniels is dead set against that infringement of the unalienable rights of man.

From this short distance north of the border, Mr. Daniels seems to be straining himself dangerously when he passes judgment upon the existence or absence of democracy by merely inquiring whether a

state imposes a capitation tax as a prerequisite for voting.

Democracy is dead in Virginia, he argues, because Virginia levies a poll tax and makes payment of that tax essential to qualification for voting.

Democracy is alive in North Carolina, one gathers by deduction, because payment of the poll tax is not made a qualification for voting.

The test is too simple.

Mr. Daniels cites the fact that 12 states with smaller populations than Virginia, cast more votes in the 1940 presidential election. He points to this as a horrible result of the poll tax afflicting Virginians and denying them their birthright.

How would Mr. Daniels explain the fact that seven states less populous than Democratic North Carolina outvoted that not-so-humble vale? Here they are, if anyone is interested: Kentucky, West Virginia, Kansas, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Indiana and Iowa.

What has the unrestricted use of the franchise gotten North Carolina? For one thing, it permits a rabble-rouser like "Our Bob" Reynolds to come roaring down from Asheville and regale with buncombe enough voters (who pay no poll tax) to get himself elected to the United States Senate.

We seem to recall that democracy as practiced in free North Carolina sometimes permits candidates for office to gain control of ballots. What was that business at Goldsboro where a candidate for Congress was on trial for misuse of the ballot?

Virginians appear well satisfied with the capitation tax. Originally, as in practically all Southern States, the poll tax was fixed as a qualification for voting to deter Negroes from overruning the polls. The tax no longer deters Virginia Negroes who really want to vote, just as it deters few, if any, white citizens who desire to vote. We are yet to find any man or woman, white or colored, who claims he could not vote because of lack of funds with which to pay the $1.50 state capitation tax. Some fail to pay the tax in time, just as they fail to register in time.

The poll tax serves another useful purpose, however, and it is this, rather than its original objective, which assures its continuance in Virginia. It helps cities and counties collect taxes promptly. Delinquent lists in Virginia are nothing like so long as those for comparative communities in North Carolina, and we have seen plenty in both states. Few people will go to the city or county treasurer to pay their $1.50 poll tax without, at the same time, making some payment on their full tax bill. And since the capitation tax must be paid six months prior to election, that means a great many people pay their taxes in the spring or early summer rather than wait until late fall and winter. It is a distinct aid in tax collections.

The poll tax has been attacked by the Association for the Advancement of the Colored People and by numerous members of Congress catering to the Negro vote in states where that vote is pivotal. Even a few Virginia newspapers have listened to these arguments without crediting th practical side of the capitation tax as a reo ment for voting.

The poll tax, as it operates in Virginia, strengthens rather than weakens democracy. Over here we believe democracy requires that every man pay his share, according to his means. The poll tax helps make sure he does.

The Virginia poll tax is as unassailable as Virginia's Jamestown and Williamsburg. We have all three, and we are going to keep them, no matter how much wind blasting is indulged below the border.

Roanoke, Va. World-News
August 14, 1941

## *Pittsylvania Politics*

The State primary of last week offered few incidents more dramatic and at the same time more disreputable than the Pittsylvania County contest for two seats in the House of Delegates. Since one of these seats was already conceded by both local political factions to its present occupant, Rev. W. C. Clark, up for reelection, the fight raged bitterly for the other seat. Preston Moses, the energetic young editor of the Pittsylvania *Tribune-Enterprise*, entered the fray as a candidate, undaunted by the fact that the publisher of his own paper, who by contract is able to control its editorial policy, was supporting the other contender, Albert E. Cox.

The situation was anomalous enough in itself, but there occurred on the day before the election an incident which rendered the whole campaign no longer amusing but disgusting and unworthy of Virginia Democracy. Farmers throughout the county found in their mail boxes Monday a pamphlet allegedly coming from the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It called for votes for Moses, since, as it stated, he was "pledged to support all Negro policies."

The pamphlet was a simple fraud, designed to arouse racial prejudice as a last resort in the attempt to defeat Moses. Martin, a Negro lawyer in Danville, who is the chairman of the NAACP for the county, made an affidavit before a notary public stating that his organization had neither endorsed Moses nor any other candidate. Yet it was too late, at that eleventh hour, for Moses to make any reply; his next edition of the Tribune-Enterprise would not appear until after the election. He had to rely on the good sense of the county electorate and their familiarity with similar attempts of the same political faction.

Mr. Moses had promised to conduct a clean campaign, relying on his record of service to the farmers of Pittsylvania, and he endeavored to keep the campaign on that level. The only possible justification for the pamphlet was a speech he had been invited to make to a gathering of colored people in the county. On that occasion he had spoken on the subject of citizenship, and had attacked what he called "fifth columnists" who were spreading the rumor that American Negroes would be better off after a Hitlerite victory.

Whoever issued the pamphlet is now thoroughly frightened, for they have offered to publish a full-page apology in the Danville *Register* in order to avert a libel suit. Against Martin, the Negro lawyer, they are attempting to use intimidation in order to prevent him from bringing the case into court.

It is a happy postscript to the whole affair to note that the scheme apparently backfired, and that the Pittsylvania voters were not to be stampeded. The final count gave Moses 2,663 votes; Clark, 1,937, and Cox, 1,342.

52e-1941
Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# Drive Made To Bring Out Rural Ballots

## Success Boosts Aim At 1,000 Goal Next Month

**PETERSBURG — More than 500 new voters have been placed upon the qualified voters lists in the counties of Virginia through the efforts of the Virginia Voters League, it was learned at the headquarters of the organization located here.**

**This league, which was organized last May, and comprises 100 local voters leagues scattered in all parts of the state, is just completing its first drive to place 1000 or more new voters on the voting lists in rural communities.**

**One of these voters leagues is located in all of the cities and in 80 counties of Virginia, and is operated with a chairman and a staff of assistants.**

**They are operating to stimulate voting as an act of civic duty, and not for the purpose of strengthening some political party, it was stated.**

It was pointed out that at present only one adult colored person in 25 is an actual voter. The league is bending its efforts to remove this wide disparity between voters and non-voters.

"These workers approach their task knowing that the old system of disfranchisement in Virginia, based on race distinction, has about vanished and that the failure of members of the race to vote is not chargeable to governing and voting officials, but to the disinterest of the citizens themselves," officials of the league commented.

**The 100 local voters leagues in the state cooperate through the Virginia Voters League headquarters here. This body has done creditable work this year, under the leadership of Luther P. Jackson, James P. Spencer, Raymond J. Valentine, Robert Cooley and others.**

**SUMMER RESULTS**

During the summer months the league conducted a drive for registering the thousands of colored persons in the state, who, though they have paid all poll taxes, have never previously registered.

This effort has already resulted in 500 or more persons registering for the first time. The league is concentrating at the present time on emphasizing the payment of poll taxes before the deadline on December 5.

During this campaign, county chairmen have registered from one to 135 voters. Their interest in the movement has been highly commended by the state office.

"These chairmen," Mr. Jackson said, "are fortunately men and women who enjoy the confidence and cooperation of the citizens of their counties and cities. Some are leading business men; some are ministers; some are teachers and principals; some are physicians and dentists, and some are farmers.

**"Some of them are the leading taxpayers in their counties. None is working for money; instead each one, along with the subchairman, is spending money to bring his local community up to the level of citizenship, where every community in America should be the level where every adult is vote conscious."**

These civic-minded leaders are working as a unit throughout the state, and during the past 60 days, eight regional conferences have been held in various sections, for the purpose of securing unified action and to become acquainted with one another. Heretofore the leagues have worked in complete isolation; they now move forward in one united body, and in friendly rivalry with each other.

**OFFICERS DIRECT STATE**

The officers of the league at Petersburg have the responsibility of giving direction to the 100 chairmen throughout the year. It is their function to furnish the chairmen with data on poll tax standings, registration techniques and voting practices in all of the counties and cities.

**It is presumed that if the people of one county know that a neighboring county is far ahead of them, they may seek to improve the lower rating of their county.**

The central office is also leading the way in the staging of special drives during the year for the purposes of stimulating the payment of 1941 poll taxes and encouraging the registration of these taxpayers, many of whom have failed to register after paying the necessary taxes.

VIRGINIA
Norfolk, Va. Pilot
December 6, 1941

# Poll Taxes Paid By Negroes in Rising Number

## More Expected to Get Ready for Voting in Coming Elections

An unusually large percentage of Negroes have been paying their poll taxes during the last few days and more are expected to be paid today and Monday, judging from what has been happening.

Monday is the last day for paying poll taxes in time to qualify for voting in the City Council election next June, when three seats are to be filled. They now are held by Mayor J. D. Wood and Councilmen L. P. Roberts, Jr., and L. C. Page.

A movement has been under way among the Negro population for several weeks to get them to pay their poll taxes and register. Part of this was attributed by political observers to the renewed interest taken in recent years by the Negroes in their city government and part to a section of the population which was not satisfied with the manner in which a labor strike against the city was handled last July and August.

Some of those who have paid their poll taxes have done so for one, two and three years. It is understood that some who have paid their poll taxes have not been able to meet other qualifications for registering to vote, however, and some who have paid poll taxes have not yet applied for registration.

Yesterday was the last day for paying city and State taxes due for this year without having penalties assessed. Long lines of taxpayers were at the city treasurer's office early yesterday morning, but these thinned out during the day, and the rush crowds often seen at the tax windows were not noticeable yesterday afternoon.

Officials in the office were unable to give an estimate on what the collections would total, for many tax payments probably were in the mail, and could not be tabulated yesterday. It is expected to be several days before tabulations are completed.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

## Mr. Randolph's Peculiar 'Fight for Freedom'

• Honorary chairman of the war-mongering "Fight for Freedom" Committee is Carter Glass—poll tax Senator from Virginia, who represents the bourbon lynch system and the feudalism which oppresses Negro and white in the South.

MAY 30 1941

It is not surprising to find the other capitalist spokesmen and fake "liberals" on this committee perfectly at home under the leadership of this reactionary enemy of democracy.

But the fact that A. Philip Randolph, Negro Social-Democrat, is on the committee shows that he has a very peculiar idea of fighting for his people. It shows indeed that Social-Democracy leads even to the surrender of the Negro people's rights—and insults the Negro people by trying to get a Negro leader to betray them.

MAY 30 194

What kind of "fight for freedom" can the war or the "defense" program be for with Carter Glass the Negro-baiter and lynch representative at its head? How can Mr. Randolph fight against the poll tax or for the constitutional rights of his people under the leadership of the poll taxer Glass?

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

## *Increase In Rural Voters Reported*

RICHMOND — Chairmen and representatives from five nearby counties attended a regional meeting of the League of Virginia Voters, held here Sunday in the offices of the Negro Organization Society in the Southern Aid Building. The meeting was attended by representatives from Henrico, Hanover, New Kent, Charles City, and King and Queen counties.

Luther P. Jackson of Petersburg, president of the association, presided and told of the progress of this movement, which is presently engaged in a campaign to register the large number of colored citizens in the rural communities, who have paid their poll taxes in the regular routine of tax payments, but who have not registered on the lists of qualified voters.

**CAMPAIGN NETS 500 VOTERS**

"Our campaign has netted more than 500 voters," the president Jackson told the conference, "and we hope to more than double this number by the end of the year."

Plans were made to increase the activity of the organization in the counties of this district, and several inspirational talks were made.

It was learned that this was the eighth regional meeting of the organization in various parts of the state this year.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

## Voters League Says Interest Is Still Low

NOV 22 1941

### Most Teachers, Preachers Show No Voting Desire

By LUTHER P. JACKSON

PETERSBURG, Va. — Poll tax paying by Negroes in Virginia in 1941 shows no progress over poll tax paying in 1940. Among the one hundred counties in the state, 60 show a decrease in the number who have paid the three years required by law; forty show a slight increase. Among the 24 cities in Virginia, 16 show a decrease, while eight register an increase.

In the losing group of cities the greatest sufferers are Richmond, Petersburg, Portsmouth and Alexandria. Richmond tops the list with a loss of more than two hundred. Among the counties, Buckingham and Caroline have lost most heavily, while Bedford and Northumberland have gained most rapidly.

**All told, the 25,000 poll tax payers of 1940 have now been reduced to 24,000. War conditions, especially in Caroline, explain some of this loss; most of it, however, is to be explained on the usual ground of disinterest.**

Despite the loss in poll tax paying, the public must be reminded that a decline for one year is not necessarily an indication of a decline in voting strength, because a vast amount of poll tax paying is done without any thought of voting.

NOV 22 1941

### Number of Qualified Voters Has Increased

The loss of one thousand poll tax payers, then, may not be the loss of one thousand voters; indeed, there is reason to believe that the number of qualified voters among Negroes is greater now than a year ago, although these qualified persons, like the whites, did not turn out in large numbers in the recent election for the governor of the state.

**A growth in qualified voters and voting interest may be attributed to the appearance of the Virginia Voters League six months ago. With a chairman and a group of associates, constituting a voters' league, in practically all the counties and cities, this organization is bound to effect some change in sentiment with respect to the democratic duty of voting.**

The immediate function of this state wide organization is to effect the registration of the ten thousand or more Negroes, who though they have paid all poll taxes, have never given any thought to voting.

### League's Main Object To Qualify All Voters

At the same time the Virginia Voters League seeks to retain and increase the number of poll tax payers. How people vote, and for whom they shall vote, after qualifying, is no concern of the state league.

Certain counties in Virginia are famous for the wide gap between the number of poll tax payers and qualified voters. Halifax County runs ahead of all have paid for three consecutive other counties with 1,127 who years. Mecklenburg has 748; Nansemond, 681; Brunswick, 498; Essex, 424; and Henry, 398.

**Yet in each of these counties, three-fourths of the loyal poll tax payers are not qualified voters because they have never registered. The league in these particular counties and interested citizens in general have a tremendous task in getting these hundreds before registrars to register.**

The job can be done inasmuch as workers in Southampton County this summer succeeded in registering 135 persons, while in the adjoining county of Nansemond similar workers brought 85 citizens within the fold. The most active and capable chairmen always get the best results.

### Average Poll Tax Payer In Most Counties Low

The average number of adults who pay the poll tax in the eight counties just named is about one in fourteen; other counties in the state have such a few poll tax payers that their average is about one in one hundred. Falling in this low group are: Accomac, Botetourt, Buckingham, Culpeper, Cumberland, Greensville, Norfolk, Northampton, and Pittsylvania counties.

Accomac has an adult Negro population of 6,385, and, therefore, a potential poll tax paying strength of 6,385, but only 21 persons made this first step toward voting in 1941.

**Accomac and Northampton Eastern Shore neighbors, with 11,000 adult Negroes, together hit the bottom with only 106 who have paid the poll tax.**

register after qualifying to vote

Strange to say the failure to by paying the poll tax is common to the cities of Virginia as well as the counties. One of the most glaring examples of this condition is the city of Roanoke where among its present 657 poll tax payers, more than half are not registered.

### Paying Tax and Not Voting Waste of Money

The ten thousand Negroes in Virginia who pay all poll taxes without voting are, in one sense, throwing away the one dollar and a half they pay. The waste lies in the fact that they do not convert their poll tax receipts into ballots.

**This condition applies to the entire state. However, there are just a few places where these citizens have made the connection between poll tax paying and voting. Among these bright spots are Caroline, Clarke, Cumberland, Charles City, Lancester, and Powhatan.**

In these counties the citizens several years ago began paying the poll tax with the sole purpose of voting. In this group of counties Cumberland is conspicuous.

The proportion of poll tax payers in Cumberland remains very low, but the forty-five, who about a year ago made up their minds to vote regardless of obstacles, actually do vote. With this valiant group the act of poll tax paying was followed by immediate registration and voting.

## Desire To Vote Growing Among Few In State

In a few counties the determination to vote has become so strong with a few people that this past summer they voted by absentee ballots. In one instance a teacher in one of the summer schools traveled 150 miles in order that she might cast her ballot in person.

**Northumberland County in the Northern Neck is another area in which Negroes have apparently acquired a mind to vote. The poll tax payers of this county moved from 112 in 1940 to 275 in 1941.**

## Voteless Teachers and Preachers Is Barrier

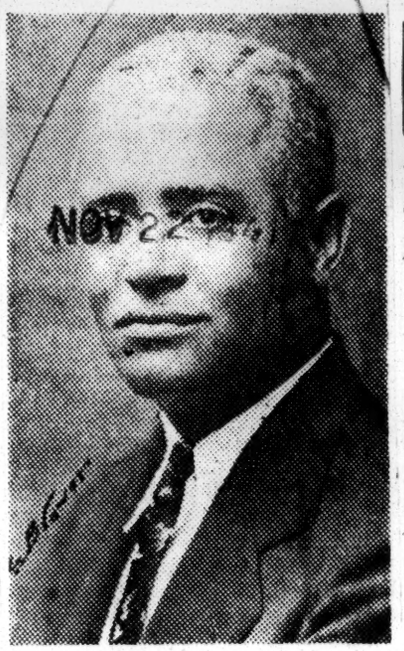
The problem of increasing the voting power of Negroes in Virginia is the problem of securing the backing of a greater number of potential leaders. Three-fourths of the school teachers are voteless, while the proportion of ministers is still greater.

Obviously an unqualified teacher and preacher can not persuade some one else to do the thing which they are not doing themselves. In one way the host of non-voting teachers and preachers constitute the greatest barrier against progress in the present voting drive.

**Teachers, ministers, and other groups may display the greatest amount of lethargy in participating in the affairs of government by voting, but they must take notice that their days for disinterest are numbered.**

..Wide awake chairmen with the leagues such as now exist will in all probability drive them out of their shells and lead them into voting and to progress.

# In Vote Drive



**LUTHER P. JACKSON**

**Dr. Luther P. Jackson of Petersburg, Va., educator and historical writer, is one of the leaders in the campaign to register voters in the rural communities of the state of Virginia who have paid their poll tax. The campaign began last summer directed by the Virginia Voters League.**

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

# *Poll Tax Payers Relatively Few*

NOV 29 1941

DR. Luther P. Jackson, head of the history department at Virginia State College has been making a study of the poll tax in Virginia as it relates to colored citizens. He found that in 46 counties having 211,175 colored persons of voting age, 61,921, or 8.0 per cent, have paid the 1941 tax. In 23 cities having a colored population of 118,140 of voting age, 8,611, or 7.3 per cent have paid the tax for the current year. It is likely, of course, that prior to December 5th, the deadline, the number of payers in both counties and cities will have increased.

Dr. Jackson's current report does not undertake to say how many of the poll tax payers voted in the recent election for Governor and other State officers. It is well known that many people who pay the tax do not trouble themselves to either register or vote. It can be said also, that in some sections of Virginia, when a person pays the poll tax the last obstacle to voting has not been removed. It is far more difficult, especially in the counties, to register than it is to pay the poll tax. It may sound queer to imply that it is "difficult" to pay the poll tax, but that is the case. In some of the counties and small cities it is difficult for a colored person—and some white persons—to pay the tax before it is overdue. When it is overdue it is added to the personal property tax bill and collected by levy or other means within the power of the local authorities.

NOV 29 1941

Dr. Jackson's studies of the poll tax have aroused considerable interest throughout the State and there has been formed a Virginia Voters League, which is undertaking to set up local branches in all of the cities and counties of the State with the purpose in view of educating people to pay the poll tax and vote. The league is non-partisan and is interested only in making people vote-conscious. It will no doubt find ways and means of softening resistance to the exercise of the suffrage through evasion and circumvention on the part of election officials.

Despite the poll tax, and the continued practice in some parts of giving would-be voters the run-around, it is comparatively easy to fully qualify to vote in Virginia.

The studies made by Dr. Jackson have revealed, however, that failure on the part of our group to figure to any considerable extent in the suffrage is not due to the poll or to circumvention on the part of registrars—at least in the larger cities. In Norfolk, for instance, where there are 27,920 colored persons of voting age only 1,275 have paid the 1941 poll tax. This comes to 4.6 of those who should have paid the tax, but it represents a much larger percentage than those who voted after having paid the tax. In Norfolk there is practically no resistance to either the payment of the tax or to registration. Any one may register who can meet the simple requirements. What happened in Norfolk also occured in Richmond, Newport News, Portsmouth and other cities, showing that there is general apathy on our part.

NOV 29 1941

It is noticeable that in the western cities of the State our people pay the poll tax in larger ratio than in the eastern cities. Where the population is more dense the poll tax is paid in smaller ratio.

621-1941

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okl.

# Have We Achieved Democracy?

JAN 25 1941

Mrs. Pearl S. Buck, author of "The Good Earth" and Pulitzer Prize winner in 1931, delivered a very interesting address at the annual banquet of the National Women's Party on the evening of December 7, 1940. The subject of Mrs. Buck's address was "Woman's Place in a Democracy".

We shall print below only a few paragraphs of Mrs. Bucks address, which occurs in the preliminary approach to her extended remarks. The noted woman who spent many years of her life in China and oriental countries said during the course of the address "The two most serious obstacles to the achievement of democracy in our country are the national discrimination against Negroes and against women".

In view of the current discussion of democracy in this country and all over the earth the Black Dispatch would like for its readers to know this noted woman with her immense powers of analysis and preception feels "the position of the Negro in this country threatens the foundations of democracy".

Listen to Mrs. Buck:

## WOMEN'S PLACE IN A DEMOCRACY

### (By Pearl S. Buck)

I suppose democracy is at once the most undefinable and often-defined word in the world today. We see definitions of it everywhere—by all sorts of people. This is inevitable in a time when so many are engaged in efforts to keep democracy—to increase and and perpetuate it. It is only natural that we try to put boundaries to that for which we feel we will give our lives if we must, and yet actually, we can comprehend totalitarianism, fascism, better than we can comprehend democracy. Democracy's opposite is so much clearer, so much more definable in black and white, than is democracy. Tyranny is far simpler, for one thing, than democracy—far more, in fact, what the world has been used to, in one way or another. Democracy is new and tyranny is old. Freedom is still experimental for the human being—we do not know yet where the proper boundaries of freedom are. They are not illimitable, for freedom carried too far for some means oppression for others. We have learned that, at least, in our own efforts toward democracy. The reason, of course, that democracy is difficult to define, while its opposite is not, is because democracy itself is still in the experimental stage. No people has yet achieved real democracy. In the history of the human race it is the newest idea, an ideal yet even more than an idea, and still in the realm of the unrealized future.

But there have been very perfect tyrannies, both past and present. It is much easier, of course, to organize the tyranny than the democracy, for people seem to fall naturally into the two great categories, the weak and the strong. Tyranny comes naturally from both, the one yielding, the other imposing its power, invited by weakness. That the rights of the weak should be considered was a cataclysmic idea—one of those agonizingly hard spiritual notions which when human beings first perceived it was so enormous, so opposed to all the instincts of our animal race, that it marked, in its mere conception, a tremendous upward step, now so remote, when human creatures ceased to crawl upon all fours as beasts, and stood erect as men and women. The day will come, perhaps, when democracy will be as natural a mode of life to us as the way we walk upon two feet. But that day is afar off. When we define democracy now it must still be as a thing hoped for but not seen. So far as we know, then, we can now only say that democracy is that way of life among people wherein individuals are given the greatest possible liberty consistent with equal liberty for all others and where the individual is allowed and encouraged to develop to the highest and fullest possible point consistent with the development of all others.

Such democracy no nation has achieved. All that the most democratic among us can say is that we have chosen the road which we hope and believe will lead to such democracy. There are other nations who have consciously chosen the road which leads away from democracy.

But of these other nations I do not wish to speak now. Today I will speak as an American looking at my own country, to me, as to you, the best country in the world. It is an infinitely happy thing to find one's self actually born into the country above all others into which if one had had the choice, one would have chosen to be born. Such was my case. I have seen most of the countries of the world and lived longer in another than in my own, and mine is the conclusion of a mature person when I say that I had rather be an American than the citizen of any other country. The peoples, I believe, we are true lovers of democracy. Our faces turn to democracy as to the sun, and our feet walk willingly toward that goal.

For we are the children of men and women who loved democracy. Their blood is in our veins. We do not have to fight against our traditions as other peoples have to struggle against theirs when we choose democracy, for we were founded on democracy, and our traditions are the traditions of liberty and of hatred of tyranny. And yet even we have not yet achieved a democracy. Within our borders there still exist today grave inequalities. We tolerate them, we condemn them, we overlook them, unwilling to compare what we do to what should be done if we are to be a true democracy.

JAN 25 1941

The two most serious obstacles to the achievement of democracy in our country are the national discrimination against Negroes and against women. As long as this twofold discrimination goes on we cannot call ourselves a democracy. I do not, in so specifying these two, overlook others. I do not forget certain economic oppressions, nor the submerged groups in certain regions of our land. But I do not include them here because we are so aware of them, and because there exists a machinery, if we use it, for relief and correction of their condition. Of the weight of race prejudice against the Negro we are aware, but we move slowly to correct it that it can be said we scarcely move at all. Of the discrimination against women we are not even aware. Women themselves are not fully aware of it. Accustomed to special privileges, they do not understand their true situation in our democracy.

I shall not speak of race tonight, not because I do not feel strongly upon it, but because of the nature of this occasion. My subject is women's place in a democracy. I cannot forbear, however, the mention of the matter of race, because I believe the position of the Negro in our country threatens the foundations of democracy here, and the continued tolerance of this position invalidates our democracy and makes its full development impossible. I mention it because I believe that women should understand more than others can understand what it means to be a Negro in the United States, for women and Negroes are the two great minority groups here. Discrimination against them is curiously similar in several important respects, the three most obvious being, first, economic, so that in periods of depression women and Negroes suffer first and most, and even in prosperity women and Negroes get lower pay than do white men; second, political, so that women and Negroes are not encouraged and in some cases not allowed to be in Government service; and, third, professional, so that women and Negroes are discouraged in many, if not most, professions, even when they are not forbidden. Neither of these great minorities ought, therefore, to forget the plight of the other, nor should either think that democracy has been achieved so long as the other is still in the position of a minority.